

# Utopian dream of dystopia in Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-four

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DIPLOMSKI RAD

Utopian dream of dystopia in *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-four*

(SMJER: ENGLSKA KNJIŽEVNOST I KULTURA)

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis will analyse the evolution of utopia as a literary genre and how it is greatly affected by the historical and political context of its time. Not only are there multiple references to its current state of society but it also was the key notion of the development of the genre.

It will explore utopian progress into dystopia, and a comparison between the two will be drawn. It will be argued that dystopia is an extent of utopia.

The paper will take a look into two of most notable dystopian novels, *1984* by George Orwell and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley. This study will be done through three key notions: Power, Technology, and Family, with Power, alongside control, being the center of the discussion. One of the reasons why the focus is on these two novels is because they have this power structure meticulously described.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Utopia – a word coined by Sir Thomas More in 1516, connotes with a wide lexical variety. According to Vieira "though the word utopia came into being to allude to imaginary paradisaical places, it has also been used to refer to a particular kind of narrative, which became known as utopian literature. This was a new literary form, and its novelty certainly justified the need for a neologism" (4).

Vieira also noted that "More resorted to two Greek words – *ouk* (that means not and was reduced to *u*) and *topos* (place), to which he added the suffix *ia*, indicating a place" (4). Translating it literally we get a noplac/nonplace, it is clear in the name that its strength is not geographical but ideological. But utopia did not immediately become "the good place" (eutopia); it is only connected to eutopia at the end of a poem that concludes the book. Despite the fact that this was an appendix to the original work, this definition remained the dominant one. It transformed utopia from a no place to a good place.

However, utopian literature was not new. Its origins can be traced back to ancient times. Plato and other ancient philosophers theorized about what are the predispositions to what we later on regarded as a utopian society. In *Republic*, Plato hypothesized about the ideal society. Here, he attempts to define justice and demonstrate how it can improve the lives of citizens. Due to their knowledge, he considers philosophers to be the most just of all individuals and bans poets. It's a goal pursued the entirety of human history.

The 1960s were a prominent age for utopian studies. According to Fitting:

Sargent stresses that there are three aspects of utopianism that should be distinguished from one another and clearly defined: the literary (to which could be added other artistic representations and imaginings of alternatives), the communitarian, and Utopian social theory ("Three Faces" 4).

(124-125)

There are a lot of crossovers between the concept of utopia and utopia as a literary genre and there is a history of utopian ideas that is much older than utopia as a literary genre. According to

Vieira, "Trousseau believed that by opting for a more inclusive definition of utopia, we are not disregarding the merits and particulars of utopia as a literary genre but recognizing the literary form as just one of the possible manifestations of utopian thought" (7).

There was a need to put utopian literature and the genre in certain parameters, and Fitting states that:

Darko Suvin's formulation is the most comprehensive in its review of earlier definitions, although he makes no reference per se to the political features of the utopia; instead he "confine[s] [his] consideration [to] utopia *as a literary genre*" (38; emphasis in original). He defends this decision by arguing that "In the last twenty years [i.e., since 1953], at least in literary criticism and theory, the premise has become acceptable that utopia is first of all a literary genre or fiction"

(125)

Suvin's definition can be found in his work *Defining the Literary Genre of Utopia: Some Historical Semantics, Some Genology, a Proposal, and a Plea*:

Utopia is the verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author's community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis.

(49)

The word utopia was the beginning, the definition stated this progress and its importance in literary history. It allowed the literary genre a momentum that would expand outside just utopia and incorporate itself in variations such as anti-utopia, satiric utopia, and dystopia. These are all concepts that existed before as well, just like utopian literature existed before More. But these are some of the milestones that made sure that the genre is thoroughly explored.

According to Vieira "what Ernst Bloch considered to be the principal energy of utopia: (is) hope. Utopia is then to be seen as a matter of attitude, as a kind of reaction to an undesirable present and an aspiration to overcome all difficulties by the imagination of possible alternatives"

(5). Utopia has always had a didactic role, it is constructed for the reader, to produce a sensation of hope in a better tomorrow. It is a method of teaching, not only a state of mind.

Utopian literature does not represent the current state, it represents a possibility and how it can be achieved. It represents a portrayal of the best possible scenarios, of what happens when mankind becomes less oriented toward just the individual.

More's idea of utopia is, in fact, the product of the Renaissance, a period when the ancient world (namely Greece and Rome) was considered the peak of mankind's intellectual achievement, and taken as a model by Europeans; but it was also the result of human logic, based on the discovery that the human being did not exist simply to accept his or her fate, but to use reason in order to build forward.

(Vieira 4)

Since Humanism and the Renaissance presented the potential of a better world, this environment enabled literature to be more optimistic and to seek previously unexplored locations where this ideal had already been realized. In addition to explaining how to create a better world, they also provided a (not-so-subtle) commentary on the existing state of affairs.

Utopia, in literature, gives a vision of "an alternative way of organizing society" (Vieira 5). This alternative way of a social organization pertains to the society of the time period covered by the work. Especially in didactic works, the current circumstance is included, and these works urge change. According to Vieira, "it is important, thus, to distinguish the original meaning attributed to the word by Thomas More from the different meanings that various epochs and currents of thought have accredited to it" (3). This change of meaning is connected to our perception of what utopia is, and our perception is connected to the reality in which we reside.

According to Vieira, "four characteristics define the concept of utopia: 1) the content of the imagined society (...); 2) the literary form into which the utopian imagination has been crystallized (...); 3) the function of utopia (...), and 4) the desire for a better life, caused by a feeling of discontentment towards the society one lives in. " (6)

Utopia transcended the imaginary island that originally housed it, and these four qualities reveal not only the genre but also the prevailing mindset of the time. But, according to Suvin:

there are three characteristics which distinguish the utopia from other forms of literature or speculation:

1. It is fictional.
2. It describes a particular state or community.
3. Its theme is the political structure of that fictional state or community...

(46)

According to Tower Sargent, "the most common error is to equate utopia and perfection, which, in English, implies finished, complete, unchanging, which is not the case with most utopias" (189). Utopias should be fluctuating and evolving to accommodate mankind's ever-growing thirst for knowledge, a desire to do better, and to acclimate to the present socio-economical stage. Most utopias however "do not demand or anticipate perfection as such, but accept considerably improved behaviour as an attainable norm" (Calcey, 108). Again, this perfection, or improved behavior, depends on the current point of view of both the author and the reader.

Vieira also noted that "one of the main features of utopia as a literary genre is its relationship with reality" (7). In the beginning, utopian texts were connected to new unexplored places. An alternative society was placed in our present time but somewhere else. When the mapping of the world was completed, there was no new place to set these kinds of utopia in. At a similar time, technological advancements like the Industrial revolution and overall mankind's progress allowed for a shift from the present to the future. As the world started to evolve at a rapid pace, utopia evolved as well, it became the future. No new places were left to explore, it could no longer be in the present, it had to move somewhere else, it became the future but here. Our future just might be brighter than ever. Future also allowed the authors to give the reader their own version of what they believed science and technology of that time are capable of. These intellectual capacities are connected to technological advancement as well as the prevailing philosophical thoughts, they are intertwined.

Man's trust in his intellectual capacities was thus stretched to the social possibilities of his country, and it was there that utopia was now to be located. Furthermore, as historical progress was believed to be inevitable, it affected not only the utopist's country but all



nations. The utopian project thus took on a universal dimension...However, these utopias were still based on the idea that only law would ensure social order.

(Vieira 10-11)

Utopia as such is always static, as it is its basic fallacy, and immediately implies the presence of laws. As Vieira notes "utopias reject their past (faced as anti-utopian), offer a frozen image of the present, and eliminate the idea of a future from their horizon: there is no progress after the ideal society has been established" (9).

Claeys proposes that "the desire to create a much improved society in which human behaviour was dramatically superior to the norm implies an intrinsic drift towards punitive methods of controlling behaviour which inexorably results in some form of police state" (108). People in utopias believe in the ideology and embrace the rules.

As time passed new ideas have been incorporated into utopian thought. Marxism is one of those schools of thought, and, according to Vieira, "the perception of time was the most important change that Marxist thought effected in utopian literature, as it saw the fulfillment of utopia as part of historical development" (Vieira 14). This is an example of how human progress and the current political situation affect the reader's view of utopia and utopianism. This change in the perception makes a shift in the literary genre as well, which now presents us with mankind's progress, and the utopia becomes a thing of the future. We become so hopeful of our existence and so sure of our continuous development, that now when we have concurred the unknown lands, we will make our future the best version of itself. And this version is no longer contained within a country, it is now universal.

Having absorbed the way Marxism conceived the future, literary utopias of the last decades of the nineteenth century – of which William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) is no doubt the best example – faced history as a process of growth of humanity, until it would reach a mature state, from which the ideal society would finally emerge. These utopias were thus truly euchronic, as they normally described a post- historical socialist-communist society on a world-scale. In fact, for Marx, as for Engels, history would only make sense if it was universal.

(Vieira, 14)

This theme of universality will continue into the dystopian genre as well. The turn happens in the eighteenth century. According to Vieira "literary dystopia utilizes the narrative devices of literary utopia, incorporating into its logic the principles of euchronia (i.e., imagining what the same place – the place where the utopist lives – will be like in another time –the future), but predicts that things will turn out badly; it is thus essentially pessimistic in its presentation of projective images" (17). But this pessimism is not without hope. The predominant function is still to educate and to give warnings.

The events that led to this shift include various experiences such as The French revolution, eugenics, and socialism. According to Claeys:

Enlightenment optimism respecting the progress of reason and science was now displaced by a sense of the incapacity of humanity to restrain its newly created destructive powers. From that time ideal societies have accordingly been more commonly portrayed negatively in dystopian rather than utopian form.

(107)

Vieira comments that "this awareness of the existing flaws in imagined societies had a positive intent, though: they aimed at making the readers keep looking for alternatives. Because of this, they came to be called critical utopias" (18). In a time of faster-than-ever technological progress, we begin to lose our humanity in the name of mass production, world wars occur, and our vision of the future is bright no more. We are seeing, day after day, the destructive side of technology, the devastating consequences of urbanization, and the disintegration of humanity when the wrong people get power. When mankind turned to destruction so did the literary genre of utopia. During this time, civilization starts to lose hope and dystopias begin to prevail. Greed for power, and greed for money, becomes emblematic of the dystopian turn. And each dystopia has "the few", the chosen, whose present isn't as bleak and whose lives are utopian. This is why a dystopian novel must contain at least one protagonist who challenges the allegedly utopian society. The reader is immediately aware of the dystopian world in a dystopian novel, despite the fact that the characters are not. To create a dystopian society, however, you need a single character who questions the status quo. If you lack such a character, the world remains utopian. This can be seen in *Brave new world*, wherein mankind has the power to create perfect humans, but still, chooses to put them in castes, to divide both knowledge and power. The upper castes

control the lower castes. The lower castes do not have the power, they have the illusion of a free life. But they do not have limited access to knowledge, they have a diminished capacity for it. In *Nineteen Eighty-four* this is done through the Inner and Outer Party which make up 15% of society and yet control the rest of the inhabitants. According to Claeys, "whether a given text can be described as a dystopia or utopia will depend on one's perspective of the narrative outcome. Such ambiguity should, however, be a provocative source of discussion, rather than a rationale for dismissing the genre as such" (108).

Our *current reality* is the starting point for viewing a utopia and a dystopia, it is this shift in the point of view that creates new varieties of utopia. Having a world filled with people who are happy to be where they are and with what they do, sounds like a utopia regardless of the concept you follow. But it is the "eugenic engineering" that directs us to the dystopian concept.

## UTOPIA/ DYSTOPIA

According to Claeys "the term 'dystopia' enters common currency only in the twentieth century, though it appears intermittently beforehand (dys-topia or 'cacotopia', bad place, having been used by John Stuart Mill in an 1868 parliamentary debate). The flowering of the dystopian genre was preceded by a variety of satirical tropes" (107). But what triggered the change that lead from utopia to dystopia? Roemer notes that "the use of Gatling guns by Union soldiers in the American Civil War also demonstrated how science, technology and industry could combine to destroy human life on a scale rarely witnessed thus far in human history" (82). These events were then followed by two world wars and the use of the atomic bomb.

Green maintains that:

Thomas More, in his *Utopia* (1516), conjures an isolated island to describe a better world but one that in hindsight sounds fascist, prescient now that the twentieth century is over, while in *1984* (1949) George Orwell positions his utopia gone wrong in a grim futuristic society. Both are characterized by oppressive canons and the suffocation of independent thought.

(2)

Even though More's work is considered utopian and Orwell's dystopian, they still have this connection to rules. Here lies the importance of perception as well, just because one society is at war and the other one is not, it does not change the fact that they are all educated in the needed art form of defending themselves.

As mentioned before, one of the functions of the utopian genre is to educate, and this function is shared by both utopian and dystopian writing. Even though both utopia and dystopia use laws to maintain their stability and structure, these laws seem harsher and out of the ordinary when dystopia is in question.

We see a similar explanation by Tower Sargent:

The two most common ways of bringing about utopia have been law and education, and although both are used at all times, the former was dominant in the early utopias and then partially supplanted by the latter. (...) science and technology emerged as a way of

transforming society, and it continues to the present, albeit often as dystopia. Particularly in the nineteenth century changes in the economic and/or political system came to the fore. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, all of the above remained, with the most important addition being changed gender relations (187).

Utopia and dystopia are not necessarily two different genres, they are a point of view of the same human desire and the possibility of the future (once utopia turns to the future). Utopia progresses into dystopia through satirical utopia and anti-utopia.

Barrish notes that "novels that imagine a future dystopia always at least implicitly pose the question of what in our own 'now' has led to the dystopian society the novel portrays" (108). As soon as mankind's idealization wears off with the introduction of science and technology used by different power structures, utopia slides into dystopia.

According to Tower Sargent, "ideology allows those in power to believe that their position is secure, and utopia allows those out of power to believe that they can change the system" (188 -189). Belief in the change of system is connected to hope. Utopia and dystopia have a common ground of pointing out what is wrong with the current society. Utopia uses a light-toned narrative that offers a solution. Dystopia tackles the destructive possibility of mankind's behavior and is more of a cautionary tale.

Both utopia and dystopia have negative elements, it is just that in dystopia they prevail (and possibly win). Utopia gives us the possibility of attaining balance while dystopia is out of a sense of balance. This balance is not connected to the number of rules that appear in both utopia and dystopia, rather it is connected to our perception of it as well as the lack of characters that are trying to discredit it.

In the beginning, utopia needed a voyage, a journey that would take the protagonists from their every day to new unexplored lands that are inhabited by societies allegedly better than those in the protagonist's country. This was the time when utopias were in the same timeline as the writer but not in the same place. This also means that the storyline of such utopian writing is located in the alternative 'now' of the author. With the world's geography being more and more explored and with the discovery of new worlds, the ideal land was not found. But as mankind progressed and made the switch in utopia where "imaginary space shifts into time with the

industrial and bourgeois revolutions" (Suvin, 79). With this shift in time, the voyage is no longer an important part of the utopian canon, and neither is it in the dystopian canon. However, there is a voyage in *Brave New World*, albeit on a smaller scale where Bernard and Lenina exit the perfectly structured state and go to a reservation where people live like in the old days. They are observed and studied, as if they are in a zoo. At the same time it is clear to the reader that the characters observing the alleged zoo are the ones living in a dystopian society.

The proles in 1984 serve a similar purpose. They reveal the extent to which the world outside the prole quarters is dystopian. Winston trades with them or buys commodities that are currently unavailable to him (like razors). They wear perfume which the Party members never wears and are not allowed to drink Victory gin, they drink beer. Paradoxically, the Party's slogan "Proles and animals are free" (Orwell 72) is indeed true. By depriving the proles of gin, a manipulatory technique, the Party sets them free. As the narrator states:

In all questions of morals they were allowed to follow their ancestral code. The sexual puritanism of the Party was not imposed upon them. Promiscuity went unpunished, divorce was permitted. For that matter, even religious worship would have been permitted if the proles had shown any sign of needing or wanting it.  
(Orwell 92)

They are free to live their life without the interference of the Party but this does not mean that they are free. They live in squalor and are not motivated to do anything even though they outnumber the inner Party. "One never saw a double bed nowadays, except in the homes of the proles" (Orwell 143). One of the way Julia seduces Winston is by putting on makeup and perfume, which was unimaginable for a Party woman.

As Winston remarks "until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious" (Orwell 72).

Paradoxically, the true dystopian reckoning comes from Winston, even though he is unaware of it at the time when he concludes that

" 'If there is hope,' wrote Winston, 'it lies in the proles'" (Orwell 69)

## POWER/FREEDOM

*Nineteen Eighty-four*, just like most dystopias starts in media res. The first chapter reveals all the aspects of the world inhabited by Winston. The reader learns about the repressive regime of Big Brother, The Two Minute Hate, the Ministry of Truth and the Ministry of Love, the INGSOC as the prevailing policy. Also, the key slogans of this world

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

(Orwell 4)

reveal Winston's reality. However, how this world came to be, is revealed to the reader later when Winston starts reading Goldstein's book. The beginning of *Brave New World* offers a glimpse into the creation of the new world, and it also starts with all its inhabitants being created into castes and having no ability to impact those decisions or, in the future, change them. Even though these two worlds are described completely differently, they both start with a description of how their inhabitants are stripped of any power and subsequently freedom.

With *Brave New World* starting with the motto "community, identity, stability" (Huxley 1), the reader is sucked into a world where the community is in the first place, where everything that is done and happens is for the benefit of the World State. Inhabitants are conditioned to be proud of their identity and position, but it is not something that they chose willingly for themselves, they are forced into it. And finally, stability is the result of all the rules and laws the purpose of which is to condition everyone into their place and make them be thankful that they are there. One of the first scenes gives an explanation of the various reasons why Epsilons (one of the lower castes) are made, and this comes straight from the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning:

"But why do you want to keep the embryo below par?" asked an ingenuous student.

"Ass!" said the Director, breaking a long silence. "Hasn't it occurred to you that an Epsilon embryo must have an Epsilon environment as well as an Epsilon heredity?"

It evidently hadn't occurred to him. He was covered with confusion.

"The lower the caste," said Mr. Foster, "the shorter the oxygen." The first organ affected was the brain. After that the skeleton. At seventy percent of normal oxygen you got dwarfs. At less than seventy eyeless monsters.

"Who are no use at all," concluded Mr. Foster.

Whereas (his voice became confidential and eager), if they could discover a technique for shortening the period of maturation what a triumph, what a benefaction to Society!

"Consider the horse."

They considered it.

Mature at six; the elephant at ten. While at thirteen a man is not yet sexually mature; and is only full-grown at twenty. Hence, of course, that fruit of delayed development, the human intelligence.

"But in Epsilons," said Mr. Foster very justly, "we don't need human intelligence."

(Huxley 11)

From this description, it is clear that not all castes have the same validity. Even though Alphas are the top caste, Epsilons too are indispensable, which is undeniable throughout the whole novel, but, even though they can have the same functionalities as upper castes, they are bred to be less intelligent. Right at the beginning of their life cycle, they are deprived of oxygen just like they will be deprived throughout their whole existence of anything else but are led to believe they have everything. However, they do have everything, everything they are conditioned to need. Epsilons do not miss anything because they are not capable of questioning whether there is anything to miss. Epsilons are not perfect, at least not to the reader, but they are conditioned to be perfect for their job as well as their habitats. They are made for their society and fit perfectly in the "caste" system. From their point of view, they have it all and are happy. Still, they are described as farm animals, "consider the horse" (Huxley 11). But, when they do feel down, the solution is at the tip of their fingertips, a soma vacation. This is also one of the reasons why children are conditioned and not raised.



Even though there is no education, but conditioning, there are students. They are not encouraged to have interests outside the possibilities of their caste, and they are not free to learn about the old ways. History is irrelevant, dirty and it corrupts. Science is the only thing that is valued because it is the only thing that brings progress. The Bokanovsky process is necessary for this stability.

"Bokanovsky's Process," repeated the Director, and the students underlined the words in their little notebooks.

One egg, one embryo, one adult-normality. But a bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo, and every embryo into a full-sized adult. Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress.

"Essentially," the D.H.C. concluded, "bokanovskification consists of a series of arrests of development. We check the normal growth and, paradoxically enough, the egg responds by budding."

(Huxley 3-4)

One of the main characters in Huxley's novel is Bernard Marx. Even though he is an Alpha plus (the highest caste) his looks do not reflect his this:

"He's so ugly!" said Fanny.

"But I rather like his looks."

"And then so *small*." Fanny made a grimace; smallness was so horribly and typically low-caste.

"I think that's rather sweet," said Lenina. "One feels one would like to pet him. You know. Like a cat."

Fanny was shocked. "They say somebody made a mistake when he was still in the bottle—thought he was a Gamma and put alcohol into his blood-surrogate. That's why he's so stunted."

"What nonsense!" Lenina was indignant.

(Huxley 39)

While describing Bernard, light is shed on another form of conditioning, the one that goes on long after school finishes, and that is the way people are taught to disrespect one another. The narrator clearly states that disrespectful society breeds people with toxic social skills while the abused have a feeling that they have nothing left to lose but embrace the abuse:

"The mockery made him feel an outsider; and feeling an outsider he behaved like one, which increased the prejudice against him and intensified the contempt and hostility aroused by his physical defects" (Huxley 56).

While Bernard doesn't fit into his caste because of his disability, he equally doesn't fit into lower castes because his intellect is better. Becoming a "casteless" individual makes Bernard radical but unhappy, and by refusing to take soma he takes some of the power back into his own hands. He is shown as having strong feeling toward Lenina, a beta that enjoys all the commodities of The World State. When he eventually asks her out he wants to spend the afternoon talking and walking (which Lenina thought "that seemed a very odd way of spending an afternoon" (Huxley 76)), and he wants to look at the ocean and to be free. The only person that grows up in the World State and believes is not free, is the same one that does not fit into any of the groups. The first notion of understanding he gets is from a person who is not conditioned by the World State, John The Savage: "If one's different, one's bound to be lonely" (Huxley 119). This understanding becomes important later in the novel. John is a descendant of an Alpha and a Beta that got stranded on the reservation. He was born and raised there and Bernard takes him outside the reservation and brings him to the World State. Even though he is a descendant of The World State inhabitants, there are numerous instances in which he does not fit in on the reservation where he was raised nor in the new world.

Bernard's only other friend is Helmholtz: "By profession he was a lecturer at the College of Emotional Engineering (Department of Writing) and the intervals of his educational activities, a working Emotional Engineer. He wrote regularly for The Hourly Radio, composed feely scenarios, and had the happiest knack for slogans and hypnopædic rhymes" (Huxley 57).

Helmholtz is the closest thing to an artist we can find in the World State and it is logical that he is the one that can tolerate Bernard. They communicate over ideas that most betas and even alphas could not relate to. Even more, he gets an even better connection with John because he grew up reading real literature and Bernard is envious of their friendship (a strong emotion that is not desirable).

One of the reasons Lenina does not want to talk, besides the conditioning that you should not get too close to anyone, could lie in the fact that she has no imagination. None of them have; they are raised with strict rules, while the music is synthetic or calculated, and the movies are not art but propaganda. And yet, she still holds power over Bernard without even fully understanding why, and a lot of his actions are aimed toward her reaction:

"That is," Lenina gave him her most deliciously significant smile, "if you still want to have me." Bernard's pale face flushed. "What on earth for?" she wondered, astonished, but at the same time touched by this strange tribute to her power." (Huxley 50)

Something similar to propaganda entertainment can be seen in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. For example, the Two Minutes Hate and art forms are made of generic and synthetic forms that are not meant to be stimulating but are used for a specific purpose: to serve the state apparatus.

A similar power that Lenina holds over Bernard is seen in her relationship with John. Lenina never falls in love. She always has whomever she wants and does the same in return. She never creates real emotional bonds because the interaction is always superficial and sexual. When she wants John, she cannot have him in that same way, immediately. This drives her towards John even more. The postponement of pleasure increases its intensity, rather the desire for it. She falls in love with John, but the love is still momentarily, and John's explanation of marriage horrifies her:

„Listen, Lenina; in Malpais people get married."

"Get what?" The irritation had begun to creep back into her voice. What was he talking about now?

"For always. They make a promise to live together for always."

"What a horrible idea!" Lenina was genuinely shocked."

(Huxley 167-168)

Even when Lenina thinks she is in love the implications of being with one person forever is dreadful and full of misunderstandings. It is against conditioning, there is only one instance in their life that should have that much value and that is the State, nothing should be more important.

This begs the question as to whether love is possible in this world, given the condition of its inhabitants. The same dilemma is raised in Orwell's novel in Winston and Julia's relationship. Given the repressive regime that bans intimacy, it is hard to imagine that these two characters can have a concept of love, especially when it comes to Julia who is younger than Winston and can't remember how things used to be before the revolution.

In Huxley's novel, one of the chants that is taught throughout conditioning is "After all, everyone works for everyone else. We can't do without anyone. " (Huxley 64), This chant reveals an obvious lack of power an individual, in the World State has, and yet it simultaneously gives them all the power, because, without any one of them, the State could not move forward (and simply existing is never enough). Everybody serves their purpose and is artificially rewarded with a content life.

Slogans that are used to control their inhabitant is a connecting point to both *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-four*. Even though slogans in *Brave New World* are used in conditioning and are subliminally set into their inhabitants, they are actively repeated throughout the novel by various characters in various situations. In *Nineteen Eighty-four* slogans are also present all the time and the characters inhabited by this world are also conditioned by them. The key three slogans that appear early in the novel are:

WAR IS PEACE  
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY  
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

(Orwell 4)

War is peace implies that there is a continuous state of war and the inhabitants of Oceania are no longer aware that the war is waging in the world. It becomes their day to day and no one

reacts to it, it is "the destruction of human labour" (Orwell 119). No one will question why there is no electricity when they know it is for the upcoming Hate week and that is an integral part in the fight against others. Freedom is slavery can be seen through how the freedom that the proles have is what makes them slaves, just like the freedom that the Party members have is also imagined, the reader is meant to believe that the inhabitants are joyous and lucky to have Big Brother, that they choose him, but the reality is totalitarian. And finally, ignorance is strength has to do with the reduction of education, history, and ultimately critical thought, wherein people are so uneducated that they are unaware of their ignorance or use doublethink into making themselves less aware. This is the pillar of Oceania but can also be seen in *Brave New World*, especially in the lower castes.

According to Gottlieb "for the majority of Oceania the triple slogan, which they accept as the very essence of Big Brother's Being, remains the language of unresolved paradox, unresolved contradiction" (53). These paradoxes are discussed in Goldstein's book *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism* (given to Winston by O'Brien), a book laying bare the procedures behind a totalitarian regime and how to wake the people up and fight back the Party. The authorship of the book remains unclear in the novel as it may be interpreted that Goldstein may be just one of the fabricated figures while the book can be attributed to the Inner Party that uses it to smoke out members with different opinions, the ones that represent a threat.

Since *Brave New World* is a scientific society that uses pleasure and entertainment as a way to keep its citizens content, the existence of the Reservation can be described as both a cautionary tale and an adventurous weekend getaway.

"... about sixty thousand Indians and half-breeds ... absolute savages ... our inspectors occasionally visit ... otherwise, no communication whatever with the civilized world ... still preserve their repulsive habits and customs ... marriage, if you know what that is, my dear young lady; families ... no conditioning ... monstrous superstitions ... Christianity and totemism and ancestor worship ... extinct languages, such as Zuñi and Spanish and Athapascan ... pumas, porcupines and other ferocious animals ... infectious diseases ... priests ... venomous lizards ..."

(Huxley 88-89)

The World State does not want to give them the opportunity of entering the new society as it might create a disbalance. The savages are not to be trusted since they do not have the required heritage and conditioning. John, the only savage that is allowed to enter the new world as opposed to those who get electrocuted when they try to escape, is a descendant of an Alpha and a Beta, and just as well, since he has no caste or conditioning, he does not fit in anywhere. It is also this same new world heritage that makes him the outcast in the reservation as well. But assimilation is what killed him. Even though his assimilation is not intentional, he resists the new world as much as he can, when he is unwillingly dragged into an orgy after he falls into a rage-infused frenzy, his life ends, but by his own hand. The only power he holds over his own existence is the control over whether his life will fall into the hands of others or whether he will end it all.

“But when it came to pan-glandular biscuits and vitaminized beef-surrogate, he had not been able to resist the shopman's persuasion. Looking at the tins now, he bitterly reproached himself for his weakness. Loathesome civilized stuff! He had made up his mind that he would never eat it, even if he were starving. "That'll teach them," he thought vindictively. It would also teach him.“

(Huxley 217)

Another way of control is through chemical substances. Soma is everywhere. Not only is it socially acceptable, but it is also served with coffee after dinner and is the police's way of controlling the masses. Even though it can kill the characters in the long run and if taken too much, while on a "soma holiday" they are provided with a step outside time. An interesting juxtaposition is put between soma and alcohol. Even though they both alter the state of mind and can be disastrous in the long run, soma is not only acceptable but also desirable while the only mention of alcohol in the new world is through the Bokanowski process where it is used to deprive lower castes of what we consider to be normal growth.

In Orwell's novel, this temporary relief is provided by Victory gin, a more subtle way of control through substances but that does not mean that it is less dangerous. Numbing the nerves and thoughts make up for a willing subject in this totalitarian society.

He took down from the shelf a bottle of colourless liquid with a plain white label marked VICTORY GIN. It gave off a sickly, oily smell, as of Chinese rice-spirit. Winston poured

out nearly a teacupful, nerved himself for a shock, and gulped it down like a dose of medicine. Instantly his face turned scarlet and the water ran out of his eyes. The stuff was like nitric acid, and moreover, in swallowing it one had the sensation of being hit on the back of the head with a rubber club. The next moment, however, the burning in his belly died down and the world began to look more cheerful.

(Orwell 5)

Torture is another way to maintain the Party members' willingness. By the end of the novel, Winston is broken down in room 101 to the point that the last words of the novel are "But it was all right, everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother. " (Orwell 298).

Lerner maintains that "Nineteen Eighty-four has only three pleasures, drinking, sex and nostalgia and that the few pleasures remaining in *1984*, then, are marked for destruction; and it is this rejection of pleasure that distinguishes *1984* from almost all other anti-Utopias, most obviously from Huxley's *Brave New World*" (72-73). As mentioned before, in *Brave New World*, pleasure is also one of the ways in which its inhabitants are controlled, by allowing them everything except nostalgia. Soma is here to successfully take them from everything and give them a timeless vacation. Looking back with fondness is the biggest threat to the worlds in both novels because looking back could enable the characters to detect flaws in the present and act in the future, as Winston unsuccessfully does. Throughout the novel Winston is burdened by the past he believes he remembers and the nostalgic feeling that gets a hold over him. He is alone in his suffering for as we mentioned before, Julia has no recollection of this past.

According to Crick "Orwell believes that individuality can only be destroyed when we are utterly alone. While we have someone to trust, our individuality cannot be destroyed. For man is a social animal, our identity arising from interaction, not autonomy" (150). The protagonists must remain in solitude, This can also be seen in Huxley characters like Bernard, who never fit in, and John who refuses to fit in.

According to Gottlieb "In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Orwell) parodies the totalitarian mentality precisely for setting up the category of the 'satanic' for the opponent in order that it could set up the category of the 'sacred' for the leader" (62). It is this larger-than-life cult figure

of the leader that can be seen in *Brave New World* as well as with the World Controllers. When Lenina is face to face with Mustapha Mond, she is just as starstruck. However, there is a key difference between The World Controllers in *Brave New World* and Big Brother in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. While the World Controllers are sacred and still attainable. Big Brother is never really shown even though he is everywhere, he remains a concept, one that is concretized in *Brave New World*.



## FAMILY

The totalitarian regimes in both novels destroy the family nucleus in order to control their inhabitants. The State, whether it is Oceania or World state, cannot control the upbringing of its future subjects in a strong family. An upbringing presumes the possibility of passing on the wrong ideology and that must be avoided at all costs. Even though *Nineteen Eighty-Four* does not have the same collective conditioning as *Brave New World*, the novel exposes the destruction and conditioning of a family through the Parsons, whose children are conditioned to spy on their parents, which eventually brings down the whole family.

As the narrator in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* warns "it was almost normal for people over thirty to be frightened of their own children" (Orwell 24). Even though these children are born and not decanted, they are being raised by the state. Parents become unnecessary, and the state takes over: "What was worst of all was that by means of such organizations as the Spies they were systematically turned into ungovernable little savages, and yet this produced in them no tendency whatever to rebel against the discipline of the Party. On the contrary, they adored the Party and everything connected with it" (Orwell 24).

In *Brave New World* the concept of family is erased, as the novel also includes the advancements in reproductive technology by manipulating the genetic background of its citizens. The narrator explains the reasons leading to the erasure of the family nucleus:

Our Ford—or Our Freud, as, for some inscrutable reason, he chose to call himself whenever he spoke of psychological matters—Our Freud had been the first to reveal the appalling dangers of family life. The world was full of fathers—was therefore full of misery; full of mothers—therefore of every kind of perversion from sadism to chastity; full of brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts—full of madness and suicide.  
(Huxley 33)

These intimate connections were considered possessions and there should be no possession other than the citizen's obligation to the World State. Hormones had to be regulated (pregnancy substitute) and fuses had to be neutralized by allowing everyone to be with everyone. Family history is not taught. Sex is not a crime, making emotional bonds "a narrow channelling of

impulse and energy" (Huxley 34). The word mother becomes a dirty joke. In the scene in which Lenina decides to tell Bernard that she would like to join him on the trip after all, he is surprised that she does so in a crowded elevator and not when they are alone: "As though I'd been saying something shocking," thought Lenina. "He couldn't look more upset if I'd made a dirty joke—asked him who his mother was, or something like that." (Huxley 50). On the other hand, the word father bears different connotations:

„John (...) fell on his knees in front of the Director, and said in a clear voice: "My father!"

The word (for "father" was not so much obscene as—with its connotation of something at one remove from the loathsomeness and moral obliquity of child-bearing—merely gross, a scatological rather than a pornographic impropriety), the comically smutty word relieved what had become a quite intolerable tension. Laughter broke out, enormous, almost hysterical, peal after peal, as though it would never stop. My father—and it was the Director! My *father*! Oh Ford, oh Ford! That was really too good. “

(Huxley 131-132)

So mother is a dirty joke and father is just a joke? Why is motherhood obscener than fatherhood in *Brave New World*? Father's role through education has been eliminated, but it did not bear all the physical and emotional bonds as mother's. Mothers are not only child bearers but nurturers, creating bonds that *Brave New World* not only tried to demoralize but is also scared of. This is the reason why the inhabitants of the World State are encouraged to change partners and have a diverse and active sex life, not a love life.

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* goes in a different direction: while marriage still exists, it is no longer the desired path: rather, celibacy is the way because "believing marriage and the care of a family to be incompatible with a twenty-four-hour-a-day devotion to duty" (Orwell 47). Love is mentioned only in Julia's and Winston's case and as mentioned earlier, this love is of a fragile nature. The only important thing about marriage is to have children: "the only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party" (Orwell 65).

Children are important for the country and the Party and they are thought the Party values from a young age. Intimate relationships, on the other hand, are cold and calculated, not emotional and irrational:

The aim of the Party was not merely to prevent men and women from forming loyalties which it might not be able to control. Its real, undeclared purpose was to remove all pleasure from the sexual act. Not love so much as eroticism was the enemy, inside marriage as well as outside it.

(Orwell 65)

The only pleasure in *Nineteen Eighty-Four's* is fuelled by devotion to the party and hate for the enemy.

*Brave New World*, on the other hand, does not have to deal with pregnancy (70% of women are sterile) and therefore can focus on providing its inhabitants with fabricated and highly controlled pleasure. To ensure everybody's right to everybody, they have mandatory orgies. This also allows characters like Bernard, who is not the most popular among the ladies, to participate in physical pleasure. However, the state still provides the euphoric drug soma to give its citizens a "holiday from reality", while in Orwell's novel, the people take Victory gin to additionally dumb down what's left of their will.

## TECHNOLOGY

The most visible difference between the worlds of Orwell's and Huxley's novel lies in the use of technology. In 1984, there are few technological marvels, such as telescreens, used primarily for the purpose of surveillance.

In *Brave New World*, technology still serves the state in a way that keeps them occupied and content, but it does make their life a lot easier than Winston's. Lenina is encouraged to buy a new belt instead of fixing her old one ("Ending is better than mending" (Huxley 40)) because in that way she also promotes the economy and its increase in both production and labour.

Oceania's only need from technology is to make the Party greater and to ensure the alleged peace. According to Carr, "these technologies (of power) make it possible to reduce the individual in her/his own mind to an insignificant moment in a much larger narrative over which the solitary person has no effective control (88). "

This is where the Thought Police comes in, and the importance for every party member to have a telescreen. As Lerner claims, "pleasure is an individual experience, its elimination is necessary to the elimination of individuality; because pleasure is naturally desired, the state needs constantly to intervene and frighten its members away from the quest for pleasure, and in order to do this successfully it must peer into and control every detail of private life" (76). What can control you better than a live stream of your day-to-day that is on 24/7?

Technology in both novels is visible in the appearance of the dwellings. While in *Nineteen Eighty-four*, the reader gets only a glimpse into Winston's decrepit apartment and O'Brien's furnished office, *Brave New World* uses the layout of architecture and transport means to show differences in castes. For example, the upper classes ride in flying cars and helicopters while the lower classes take the train.

Technological advancement is, however, mostly visible in the genetical fabrication of the inhabitants of *Brave New World*. Not only is fertilization in vitro, but it is also been taken away from women all together. The babies are not born, they are decanted, and even before that, their whole life path has already been predetermined. Decanting just continues on an already set path.

They are kept young until their sixties and then they just perish. Bernard describes this process to Lenina when she is shocked by her first sight of an old person on the reservation:

"What's the matter with him?" whispered Lenina. Her eyes were wide with horror and amazement.

"He's old, that's all," Bernard answered as carelessly as he could. He too was startled; but he made an effort to seem unmoved.

"Old?" she repeated. "But the Director's old; lots of people are old; they're not like that."

That's because we don't allow them to be like that. We preserve them from diseases. We keep their internal secretions artificially balanced at a youthful equilibrium. We don't permit their magnesium-calcium ratio to fall below what it was at thirty. We give them transfusion of young blood. We keep their metabolism permanently stimulated. So, of course, they don't look like that. Partly," he added, "because most of them die long before they reach this old creature's age. Youth almost unimpaired till sixty, and then, crack! the end."

(Huxley 95)

Not only are these people created, but they are also serviced and kept in their prime just like a car, but there is a limited number of spare parts that can be provided. Technology turns them into an extension of itself.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the narrator reveals that proles have no access to technology: "They were born, they grew up in the gutters, they went to work at twelve, they passed through a brief blossoming-period of beauty and sexual desire, they married at twenty, they were middle-aged at thirty, they died, for the most part, at sixty" (Orwell 71). They are not given the possibility of a better and healthier life, they just survive. And yet, like the citizens of *Brave New World*, it seems that the proles also have the same expiry date.

Consumption is what drives the World State technology and vice versa. The inhabitants are encouraged to increase their consumption as much as possible and not to fix anything. This demand increases production, it ensures jobs, jobs bring stability, and the demand also increases innovation. Innovation on the other hand allows all the inhabitants to have a better quality of life:

"imagine the folly of allowing people to play elaborate games which do nothing whatever to increase consumption" (Huxley 25).

## CONCLUSION

As the discussion has shown, utopia and dystopia as sociological concepts and types of writing have overlapping boundaries.

Both novels reflect the worlds that to most of their inhabitants appear as utopian, while the reader, which is in line with the genre of dystopian fiction, detects the dystopian setting. Both novels also construct individuals who may seem to be defying the system just to be crushed by it. Family, power and technology used in both novels to serve the state. This is the reason why individuals such as Winston in Orwell's and Bernard in Huxley's novel, are doomed to fail. Their sole purpose is to expose dystopia in an allegedly utopian society, and pay the price for that very act.

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## Abstract

This thesis talks about the origins of the literary genre of utopia and the way it developed throughout history. It follows the timeline that transforms utopia into dystopia as well as the importance of perspective.

The concept of utopia and dystopia is then exemplified with two novels, *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Through the three selected topics of power, family, and technology, the thesis discusses how they are used and the conditions to serve the state in both novels. The discussion shows while family and power in both novels are treated in the same way, technology in *Brave New World* appears to be serving its citizens, but in the end, it is still used to control them, which again corresponds to the only available technology in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The paper discusses the necessary destruction of the family nucleus in order to maintain power over its inhabitants and how raising and nurturing become conditioning.

## Key words

Utopia, Dystopia, family, technology, power, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *Brave New World*