Utopias and Dystopias

Utopia was the title of a book about an imaginary commonwealth, written in latin (1515-1516) by the Renaissance Humanist Sir Thomas More.

The word *Utopia* comes from two Greek words "outopia" (no place) and "eutopia" (good place); and **utopia** has come to represent an ideal non existent political state and way of life where all human wishes and desires are realized. The best known example of a utopia is the biblical "Garden of Eden," a natural utopia now lost.

The concept of utopia serves three main functions in literature: 1. create a nostalgic vision, 2. Show a feasible social experiment, 3. provide a form of social criticism.

Most utopias are presented in fiction as a distant country reached by traveling adventurers; some examples are: Tommaso Campanella's "City of the Sun" (1623), Francis Bacon's "New Atlantis" (1627), Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backwards" (1888), William Morris "News from Nowhere" (1891), and James Hilton's "Lost Horizon" (1934).

Perhaps the best known example of an attempt to create a utopian society is the Kibbutz in Israel. The principal aim is to create social equality by members working to their capacity and in return they receive food, clothing, housing, medical and other services according to need.

Many authors have used fiction as a means of satire of utopian societies. In these texts the author satirizes the human dream of a utopian society by showing the when all human wishes and desires are granted humans become bored with life and are therefore not happy even in a perfect world. Examples of works which satirize of utopias are: Johnathon Swift's "Gulliver's Travels (1726) and Samuel Butler's Erewhon (1872).

Dystopia (bad place) has come to be applied to works of fiction which represent a very unpleasant imaginary world, in which ominous tendencies of our present social, political and technological order are projected into some future society. Dystopias through an exaggerated worst case scenario make a criticism about a current trend, societal, or political norm. Examples of dystopia are: Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" (1932) and George Orwell's "1984" (1949).

Dystopias: Definition and Characteristics

Utopia: A place, state, or condition that is ideally perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs, and conditions.

Dystopia: A futuristic, imagined universe in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through corporate, bureaucratic, technological, moral, or totalitarian control. Dystopias, through an exaggerated worst-case scenario, make a criticism about a current trend, societal norm, or political system.

Characteristics of a Dystopian Society

- Propaganda is used to control the citizens of society.
- Information, independent thought, and freedom are restricted.
- A figurehead or concept is worshipped by the citizens of the society.
- Citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance.
- Citizens have a fear of the outside world.
- Citizens live in a dehumanized state.
- The natural world is banished and distrusted.
- Citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad.
- The society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.

Types of Dystopian Controls

Most dystopian works present a world in which oppressive societal control and the illusion of a perfect society are maintained through one or more of the following types of controls:

- Corporate control: One or more large corporations control society through products, advertising, and/or the media. Examples include *Minority Report* and *Running Man*.
- Bureaucratic control: Society is controlled by a mindless bureaucracy through a tangle of red tape, relentless regulations, and incompetent government officials. Examples in film include *Brazil*.
- Technological control: Society is controlled by technology—through computers, robots, and/or scientific means. Examples include *The Matrix*, *The Terminator*, and *I, Robot*.
- Philosophical/religious control: Society is controlled by philosophical or religious ideology often enforced through a dictatorship or theocratic government.

The Dystopian Protagonist

- often feels trapped and is struggling to escape.
- questions the existing social and political systems.
- believes or feels that something is terribly wrong with the society in which he or she lives.
- helps the audience recognizes the negative aspects of the dystopian world through his or her perspective.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs

When people are very hungry or thirsty they can think of little else but finding something to eat or drink. At such times, other needs—whether for security, love or competence become unimportant. On the other hand, when a person's needs for food and water have been met, such needs become less central and other motives are likely to take on greater importance. These observations by Abraham Maslow (1943) lead to his influential view on human motivation.

Maslow proposed that human needs exist at five different levels, ranging from the *lowest* and most basic to the *highest* level needs; represented by an individuals needs to fulfill their own *unique* potential. Maslow arranged these needs in a pyramid ranging from highest to lowest. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is broken into five parts, these are:

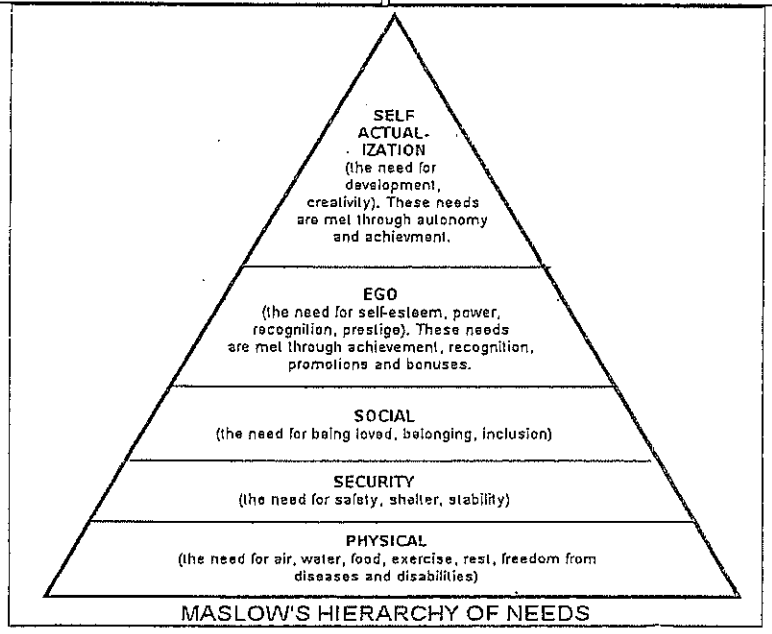
1. Physical needs—these are the basic needs for survival like food, water, clothing etc.
2. Security needs—the needs to feel physically and psychology secure, these include safety, shelter etc.
3. Social needs—the need to love and be loved by others.
4. Ego needs—the need to achieve self esteem, power etc.
5. Self Actualization—the need to fulfill unique potential of an individual, e.g. a musician must play music or a painter must paint: what a man/woman can be he/she must be.

Maslow believed that a person must first satisfy needs at the lower levels of the pyramid before being able to achieve the needs at the higher levels of the hierarchy. For example a hungry person will think and be motivated by nothing other than food.

But when food is plentiful and other biological needs are met, the need for safety becomes more important. When a person feels safe he/she will be motivated to achieve the needs of for love and so on up the pyramid. Maslow feels that even if people have all the lower needs met they will still be discontent until they feel they are fulfilling their own unique potential.

Maslow noted that very few people at any one time have self-actualized and that this remains rare in society. Maslow felt that self-actualization may take a whole lifetime to unfold, so it is not likely among young people.

The general consensus on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is that it seems sound for the very lowest levels of needs but as these needs are met human motivation tends to become more complex. The needs for love and esteem seem to vary from one person the next, and the behavior of people is often motivated by more than one need at the same time.



MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

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Future

(1)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

In a linear conception of time, the **future** is the portion of the time line that has yet to occur, i.e. the place in space-time where lie all events that still have not occurred. In this sense the future is opposed to the past (the set of moments and events that have already occurred) and the present (the set of events that are occurring now).

The future has always had a very special place in philosophy and, in general, in the human mind. This is true largely because human beings often want a forecast of events that will occur. The forecasts often show that lives on... It is perhaps possible to argue that the evolution of the human brain is in great part an evolution in cognitive abilities necessary to forecast the future, i.e. abstract imagination, logic and induction. Imagination permits us to "see" (i.e. predict) a plausible model of a given situation without *observing* it, therefore mitigating risks. Logical reasoning allows one to predict inevitable consequences of actions and situations and therefore gives useful information about future events. Induction permits the association of a cause with consequences, a fundamental notion for every forecast of future time.

Despite these cognitive instruments for the comprehension of future, the stochastic nature of many natural and social processes has made forecasting the future a long-sought aim of many people and cultures throughout the ages. Figures claiming to see into the future, such as prophets and diviners, have enjoyed great consideration and even social importance in many past and present communities. Whole pseudo-sciences, such as astrology and cheiromancy, were constructed with the aim of forecasting the future. Much of physical science too can be read as an attempt to make quantitative and objective predictions about events.

The Future also forms a prominent subject for religion. Religions often offer prophecies about life after death and also about the end of the world. The conflict in the Christian religion between the knowledge of the future by God and the freedom of humanity leads, for example, to the doctrine of predestination.

Future of Humankind

There are several scenarious necessary to discuss. One of the currently most popular scenarios is a posthuman future, which predicts the rise of "neohumans", cyborgs and artificial intelligence. Futurists armed themselves with the concept of accelerated growth predict the technological singularity - the moment in time where the accelerated rate of technological and social change will overwhelm people.

Natural Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence
Sunday 18 May 2003

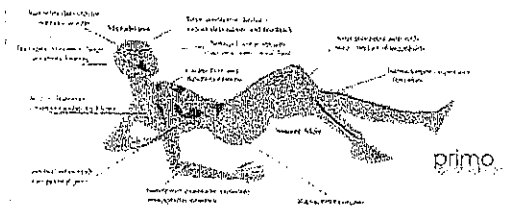
The cyborg, that posthuman hybrid of flesh and machine, has long been fodder for futuristic Hollywood flicks like Terminator. Cyborgs make most of us nervous about what sort of future we're facing. But acclaimed philosopher and cognitive scientist Andy Clark reckons all of us are *already* Natural Born Cyborgs, with minds made to merge with the material world - your watch, paper, computer. Our mind, he argues, extends well beyond our brain, beyond our ancient skinbag and into the world at large. The cyborgian future is here...and it always been.

http://www.abc.net.au/rn/science/mind/s850880.htm

(2)

Posthuman (human evolution)

A **posthuman** or **post-human** is, according to transhumanist philosophers, a hypothetical future being "*whose basic capacities so radically exceed those of present humans as to be no longer unambiguously human by our current standards.*"[1]



Natasha Vita-More's *Primo* is an artistic depiction of a hypothetical **posthuman** of transhumanist speculation.

The difference between the posthuman and other hypothetical sophisticated non-humans is that a posthuman *was once* a human, either in its lifetime or in the lifetimes of some or all of its direct ancestors. As such, a prerequisite for a posthuman is a transhuman, the point at which the human being begins surpassing his own limitations, but is still recognisable as a human person or similar.[1]

Posthumans could be a symbiosis of human and artificial intelligence, or uploaded consciousnesses, or the result of making many smaller but cumulatively profound technological augmentations to a biological human, i.e. a cyborg. Some examples of the latter are redesigning the human organism using advanced nanotechnology or radical enhancement using some combination of technologies such as genetic engineering, psychopharmacology, life extension therapies, neural interfaces, advanced information management tools, memory enhancing drugs, wearable or implanted computers, and cognitive techniques.[1]

A variation on the posthuman theme is the notion of the "Posthuman God"; the idea that posthumans, being no longer confined to the parameters of "humanness", might grow physically and mentally so powerful as to appear possibly god-like by human standards. This notion should not be interpreted as being related to the idea portrayed in some soft science fiction that a sufficiently advanced species may "ascend" to a superior plane of existence - rather, it merely means that some posthuman being may become so exceedingly intelligent and technologically sophisticated that its behaviour would not possibly be comprehensible to modern humans, purely by reason of their limited intelligence and imagination.

At what point does a human become posthuman? Steven Pinker, a cognitive neuroscientist and author of *How the Mind Works*, poses the following hypothetical, which is an example of the Ship of Theseus paradox:

> Surgeons replace one of your neurons with a microchip that duplicates its input-output functions. You feel and behave exactly as before. Then they replace a second one, and a third one, and so on, until more and more of your brain becomes silicon. Since each microchip does exactly what the neuron did, your behavior and memory never change. Do you even notice the difference? Does it feel like dying? Is some other conscious entity moving in with you?[2]

As used in this article, "posthuman" does not refer to a conjectured future where humans are extinct or otherwise absent from the Earth. As with other species who speciate from one another, both humans and posthumans could continue to exist. However, this does appear to be a possible viewpoint among a minority of transhumanists such as Marvin Minsky and Hans Moravec, who could be considered misanthropes, at least in regards to humanity in its current state.

In transhumanism and science fiction, **mind uploading** (also occasionally referred to by other terms such as **mind downloading**, **mind transfer**, **whole brain emulation**, **whole body emulation**, or **electronic transcendence**) refers to the hypothetical transfer of a human mind to an artificial substrate, such as a computer simulation.

Thinkers with a strongly mechanistic view of human intelligence (such as Marvin Minsky) or a strongly positive view of robot-human social integration (such as Hans Moravec and Ray Kurzweil) have openly speculated about the possibility and desirability of this.

In the case where the mind is transferred into a computer, the subject would become a form of artificial intelligence, sometimes called an infomorph or "*noömorph*." In a case where it is transferred into an artificial body, to which its consciousness is confined, it would also become a robot. In either case it might claim ordinary human rights, certainly if the consciousness within was feeling (or was doing a good job of simulating) as if *it* was the donor.

Uploading consciousness into bodies created by robotic means is a goal of some in the artificial intelligence community. In the uploading scenario, the physical human brain does not move from its original body into a new robotic shell; rather, the consciousness is assumed to be recorded and/or transferred to a new robotic brain, which generates responses indistinguishable from the original organic brain.

The idea of uploading human consciousness in this manner raises many philosophical questions which people may find interesting and disturbing, such as matters of individuality and the soul. Vitalists would say that uploading was a priori (http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/A_priori) impossible. Many people also wonder if they were uploaded, would it be their sentience uploaded, or simply a copy?

Even if uploading is theoretically possible, there is currently no technology capable of recording or describing mind states in the way imagined, and no one knows how much computational power or storage would be needed to simulate the activity of the mind inside a computer.

Theoretical methods

True mind uploading remains speculation: the technology to perform such a feat is not currently available. A number of methods have however, been suggested to carry out mind transfers in the future.

Blue Brain Project and computational issues

On June 6, 2005 IBM and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne announced the launch of a project to build a complete simulation of the human brain, entitled the "Blue Brain Project".[1] The project will use a supercomputer based on IBM's Blue Gene design to map the entire electrical circuitry of the brain. The project seeks to research aspects of human cognition, and various psychiatric disorders caused by malfunctioning neurons, such as autism. Initial efforts are to focus on experimentally accurate, programmed characterization of a single neocortical column in the brain of a rat, as it is very similar to that of a human but at a smaller scale, then to expand to an entire neocortex (the alleged seat of higher intelligence) and eventually the human brain as a whole.

However, it is important to note that according to Henry Markram, lead researcher of the BBP, "it is not [their] goal to build an intelligent neural network."[2] On the same page, when asked if he believes a computer can ever be an exact simulation of the human brain, Markram replies exactly as follows:

"This is not likely nor necessary. It will be very difficult because, in the brain, every molecule is a powerful computer and we would need to simulate the structure and function of trillions upon trillions of molecules as well as all the rules that govern how they interact. You would literally need computers that are trillions of times bigger and faster than anything existing today. Mammals can make very good copies of each other, we do not need to make computer copies of mammals. That is not our goal. We want to try to understand how the biological system functions and malfunctions so that this knowledge can benefit mankind."

Advocates of mind uploading often point to Moore's law to support the notion that the necessary computing power may become available within a few decades, though it would probably require advances beyond the integrated circuit technology which has dominated since the 1970s. Several new technologies have been proposed, and prototypes of some have been demonstrated, such as the optical neural network based on the silicon-photonic chip (harnessing special physical properties of Indium Phosphide) which Intel showed the world for the first time on September 18, 2006.[3] Other proposals include 3-dimensional computers based on carbon nanotubes (researchers have already demonstrated individual logic gates built from carbon nanotubes[4]) and also perhaps the quantum computer, currently being worked on internationally as well as most famously by computer scientists and physicists at the IBM Almaden Research Center, which promises to be useful in simulating the behavior of quantum systems; such ability would enable protein structure prediction which could be critical to correct emulation of intracellular neural processes. Present methods require use of massive computational power (as the BBP does with IBM's Blue Gene Supercomputer) to use the essentially classical computing architecture for serial deduction of the quantum mechanical processes involved in ab initio protein structure prediction. If necessary, should the quantum computer become a reality, its capacity for exactly such rapid calculations of quantum mechanical physics may well help the effort by reducing the required computational power per physical size and energy needs, as Markman warns would be needed (and thus why he thinks it would be difficult, besides unattractive) should an entire brain's simulation, let alone emulation (at both cellular and molecular levels) be feasibly attempted. Reiteration may also be useful for distributed simulation of a common, repeated function (e.g., proteins).

Ultimately, nano-computing is projected to hold the requisite capacity for computations per second estimated necessary, in surplus. If Kurzweil's Law of Accelerating Returns (a variation on Moore's Law) holds true, rate of technological development should accelerate exponentially towards the technological singularity, heralded by the advent of viable though relatively primitive mind uploading techniques, his prediction being that the Singularity may occur around the year 2045.[5]

Serial sectioning

A likely method for mind uploading is serial sectioning, in which the brain tissue and perhaps other parts of the nervous system are frozen, sliced apart or ablated layer by layer - a technique now possible automatically by laser, instead of semi-automatically by diamond knife as in a conventional cryo-ultramicrotome, and scanned at high resolution, perhaps with a transmission electron microscope. The scans would then be reconstructed 3-dimensionally and uploaded by means of an interpretation algorithm to appropriate emulation hardware (i.e., an artificial brain). Such a computer may require microelectromechanical systems (MEMS), or else perhaps optical or nano computing for comparable speed and reduced size and sophisticated telecommunication between the brain and body (whether it exists in virtual reality, artificially as an android, or cybernetically as in sync with a biological body through a transceiver), but would not seem to require molecular nanotechnology. Simply reproducing the structures visible by electron microscopy, however, would not allow replication of the function of a brain, since the function of brain tissue is determined by molecular events, particularly at synapses, that cannot be revealed by electron microscopy. Sophisticated immunohistochemistry staining methods are required to reveal the protein signatures representative of neural function, and are detectable using Confocal laser scanning microscopy.

A more advanced hypothetical technique that would require nanotechnology might involve infiltrating the intact brain with a network of cell-sized machines to "read" the structure and activity of the brain in situ, much like current-day electrode meshes but on a much finer and more sophisticated scale. This might even allow for the replacement of living neurons with artificial neurons one by one while the subject is still conscious, providing a smooth transition from an organic to synthetic brain - potentially significant for those who worry about the loss of personal continuity that other uploading processes may entail. This method has been likened to upgrading the whole Internet by replacing, one by one, each computer connected to it with similar computers using newer hardware.

"Cyborging"

Another theoretically possible method of mind uploading from organic to inorganic medium, related to the idea described above of replacing neurons one at a time while consciousness remained intact, would be a much less precise but much more feasible (in terms of technology currently known to be physically possible) process of "*cyborging*". Once a given person's brain is mapped, it is replaced piece-by-piece with computer devices which perform the exact same function as the regions preceding them, after which the patient is allowed to regain consciousness and validate that there has not been some radical upheaval within his own subjective experience of reality. At this point, the patient's brain is immediately "*re-mapped*" and another piece is replaced, and so on in this fashion until, the patient exists on a purely hardware medium and can be safely extricated from the remaining organic body.

Brain imaging

It may also be possible to use advanced neuroimaging technology to build a detailed three-dimensional model of the brain using non-invasive methods. This possibility, however, could run into physical limitations concerning the resolution that can be achieved. Very high-resolution brain imaging (down to the nanometer) is currently available, but it would require destroying the brain by means of a serial sectioning scan as described above.

Recreating

It has also been suggested (for example, in Greg Egan's "jewelhead" stories[6]) that a detailed examination of the brain itself may not be required, that the brain could be treated as a black box instead and effectively duplicated "for all practical purposes" by merely duplicating how it responds to specific external stimuli. This leads into even deeper philosophical questions of what the "self" is.

Copying vs. moving

With most projected mind uploading technology it is implicit that "copying" a consciousness could be as feasible as "moving" it, since these technologies generally involve simulating the human brain in a computer of some sort, and digital files such as computer programs can be copied precisely. It is also possible that the simulation could be created without the need to destroy the original brain, so that the computer-based consciousness would be a copy of the still-living biological person, although some proposed methods such as serial sectioning of the brain would necessarily be destructive. In both cases it is usually assumed that once the two versions are exposed to different sensory inputs, their experiences would begin to diverge, but all their memories up until the moment of the copying would remain the same.

By many definitions, both copies could be considered the "same person" as the single original consciousness before it was copied. At the same time, they can be considered distinct individuals once they begin to diverge, so the issue of which copy "inherits" what could be complicated. This problem is similar to that found when considering the possibility of teleportation, where in some proposed methods it is possible to copy (rather than only move) a mind or person. This is the classic philosophical issue of personal identity. The problem is made even more serious by the possibility of creating a potentially infinite number of initially identical copies of the original person, which would of course all exist simultaneously as distinct beings.

Philosopher John Locke published "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" in 1689, in which he proposed the following criterion for personal identity: if you remember thinking something in the past, then you are the same person as he or she who did the thinking. Later philosophers raised various logical snarls, most of them caused by applying Boolean logic, the prevalent logic system at the time. It has been proposed that modern fuzzy logic can solve those problems,[7] showing that Locke's basic idea is sound if one treats personal identity as a continuous rather than discrete value.

In that case, when a mind is copied -- whether during mind uploading, or afterwards, or by some other means -- the two copies are initially two instances of the very same person, but over time, they will gradually become different people to an increasing degree.

The issue of copying vs moving is sometimes cited as a reason to think that destructive methods of mind uploading such as serial sectioning of the brain would actually destroy the consciousness of the original and the upload would itself be a mere "copy" of that consciousness. Whether one believes that the original consciousness of the brain would transfer to the upload, that the original consciousness would be destroyed, or that this is simply a matter of definition and the question has no single "objectively true" answer, is ultimately a philosophical question that depends on one's views of philosophy of mind.

Because of these philosophical questions about the survival of consciousness, there are some who would feel more comfortable about a method of uploading where the transfer is gradual, replacing the original brain with a new substrate over an extended period of time, during which the subject appears to be fully conscious (this can be seen as analogous to the natural biological replacement of molecules in our brains with new ones taken in from eating and breathing, which may lead to almost all the matter in our brains being replaced in as little as a few months[8]). As mentioned above, this would likely take place as a result of gradual cyborging, either nanoscopically or macroscopically, wherein the brain (the original copy) would slowly be replaced bit by bit with artificial parts that function in a near-identical manner, and assuming this was possible at all, the person would not necessarily notice any difference as more and more of his brain became artificial.

Ethical issues of mind uploading

There are many ethical issues concerning mind uploading. Viable mind uploading technology might challenge the ideas of human immortality, property rights, capitalism, human intelligence, an afterlife, and the abrahamic view of man as created in God's image. These challenges often cannot be distinguished from those raised by all technologies that extend human technological control over human bodies, e.g. organ transplant. Perhaps the best way to explore such issues is to discover principles applicable to current bioethics problems, and question what would be permissible if they were applied consistently to a future technology. This points back to the role of science fiction in exploring such problems, as powerfully demonstrated in the 20th century by such works as Brave New World, Nineteen Eighty-Four, Dune and Star Trek, each of which frame current ethical problems in a future environment where those have come to dominate the society.

"same" sentience, or simply an exact copy with the same memories and personality. Although this difference would be undetectable to an external observer (and the upload itself would probably be unable to tell), it could mean that uploading a mind would actually kill it and replace it with a clone. Some people would be unwilling to upload themselves for this reason. If their sentience is deactivated even for a nanosecond, they assert, it is permanently wiped out. Some more gradual methods may avoid this problem by keeping the uploaded sentience functioning throughout the procedure.

Mind uploading in science fiction

Uploading is a common theme in science fiction. Some of the earlier instances of this theme were in the Roger Zelazny 1968 novel *Lord of Light* and in Frederik Pohl's 1955 short story "Tunnel Under the World." A near miss was Neil R. Jones' 1931 short story "The Jameson Satellite", wherein a person's organic brain was installed in a machine, and Olaf Stapledon's "Last and First Men" (1930) had organic human-like brains grown into an immobile machine.

Another of the "firsts" is the novel *Detta är verkligheten* (This is reality), 1968, by the renowned philosopher and logician Bertil Mårtensson, in which he describes people living in an uploaded state as a means to control overpopulation. The uploaded people believe that they are "alive", but in reality they are playing elaborate and advanced fantasy games. In a twist at the end, the author book *Ubik* by Philip K. Dick it takes the subject to its furthest point of all the early novels in the field.

Frederik Pohl's *Gateway* series (also known as the Heechee Saga) deals with a human being, Robinette Broadhead, who "dies" and, due to the efforts of his wife, a computer scientist, as well as the computer program Sigfrid von Shrink, is uploaded into the "64 Gigabit space" (now archaic, but Fred Pohl wrote *Gateway* in 1976). The Heechee Saga deals with the physical, social, sexual, recreational, and scientific nature of cyberspace before William Gibson's award-winning *Neuromancer*, and the interactions between cyberspace and "meatspace" commonly depicted in cyberpunk fiction. In *Neuromancer*, a hacking tool used by the main character is an artificial infomorph of a notorious cyber-criminal, *Dixie Flatline*. The infomorph only assists in exchange for the promise that he be deleted after the mission is complete.

In the 1982 novel *Software*, part of the Ware Tetralogy by Rudy Rucker, one of the main characters, Cobb Anderson, has his mind uploaded and his body replaced with an extremely human-like android body. The robots who persuade Anderson into doing this sell the process to him as a way to become immortal.

The fiction of Greg Egan has explored many of the philosophical, ethical, legal, and identity aspects of mind uploading, as well as the financial and computing aspects (i.e., hardware, software, processing power) of maintaining "copies". In Egan's *Permutation City* and *Diaspora*, "copies" are made by computer simulation of scanned brain physiology. Also, in Egan's "Jewelhead" stories, the mind is transferred from the organic brain to a small, immortal backup computer at the base of the skull, with the organic brain then being surgically removed.

The Takeshi Kovacs novels by Richard Morgan was set in a universe where mind transfers were a part of standard life. With the use of cortical stacks, which record a person's memories and personality into a device implanted in the spinal vertebrae, it was possible to copy the individual's mind to a storage system at the time of death. The stack could be uploaded to a virtual reality environment for interrogation, entertainment, or to pass the time for long distance travel. The stack could also be implanted into a new body or "sleeve" which may or may not have biomechanical, genetic, or chemical "upgrades" since the sleeve could be grown or manufactured. Interstellar travel is most often accomplished by digitized human freight ("dhf") over faster-than-light needlecast transmission.

The Wild, and War in Heaven), the verb "cark" is used for uploading one's mind (and also for changing one's DNA). Carking is done for soul-preservation purposes by the members of the Architects church, and also for more sinister (or simply unknowable) purposes by the various "gods" that populate the galaxy — such gods being human minds that have now grown into planet- or nebula-sized synthetic brains. The climax of the series centers around the struggle to prevent one character from creating a Universal Computer (under his control) that will incorporate all human minds (and indeed, the entire structure of the universe).

In the popular computer game Total Annihilation, the 4,000-year war that eventually culminated with the destruction of the Milky Way galaxy was started over the issue of mind transfer, with one group (*the Arm*) resisting another group (*the Core*) who were attempting to enforce a 100% conversion rate of humanity into machines, because machines are durable and modular, thereby making it a "public health measure."

In the popular science fiction show *Stargate SG-1* the alien race who call themselves the Asgard rely solely on cloning and mind transferring to continue their existence. This was not a choice they made, but a result of the decay of the Asgard genome due to excessive cloning, which also caused the Asgard to lose their ability to reproduce.

The Thirteenth Floor is a film made in 1999 directed by Josef Rusnak. In the film, a scientific team discovers a technology to create a fully functioning virtual world which they could experience by taking control of the bodies of simulated characters in the world, all of whom were self-aware. One plot twist was that if the virtual body a person had taken control of was killed in the simulation while they were controlling it, then the mind of the simulated character the body originally belonged to would take over the body of that person in the "real world".

In the series *Battlestar Galactica* the antagonists of the story are the Cylons, sentient computers created by man which developed to become nearly identical to human beings. When they die they rely on mind transferring to keep on living so that "death becomes a learning experience".

The 1995 movie Strange Days explores the idea of a technology capable of recording a conscious event. However, in this case, the mind itself is not uploaded into the device. The recorded event, which time frame is limited to that of the recording session, is frozen in time on a data disc much like today's audio and video. Wearing the "helmet" in playback mode, another person can experience the external stimuli interpretation of the brain, the memories, the feelings, the thoughts and the actions that the original person recorded from his/her life. During playback, the observer temporarily quits his own memories and state of consciousness (the real self). In other words, one can "live" a moment in the life of another person, and one can "live" the same moment of his/her life more than once. In the movie, a direct link to a remote helmet can also be established, allowing another person to experience a live event.

Mind uploading advocates

Followers of the Raëlian religion advocate mind uploading in the process of human cloning to achieve eternal life. Living inside of a computer is also seen by followers as an eminent possibility. [9]

However, mind uploading is also advocated by a number of secular researchers in neuroscience and artificial intelligence, such as Marvin Minsky. In 1993, Joe Strout created a small web site called the Mind Uploading Home Page, and began advocating the idea in Cryonics circles and elsewhere on the net. That site has not been actively updated in recent years, but it has spawned other sites including MindUploading.org, run by Randal A. Koene, Ph.D., who also moderates a mailing list on the topic. These advocates see mind uploading as a medical procedure which could eventually save countless lives.

SCI-FI TIMELINE

TIME PERIOD	EXAMPLE TEXTS	THEME/ CHARACTERISTICS	SOCIAL INFLUENCES
1900'S – 1920'S	A trip to the moon Frankenstein Metropolis 20000 Leagues under the sea The world Set Free	Space Travel Early Cloning Capitalism vs. exploration Atomic Warfare	WWI Russian Cold War 1917 Stalin Theory of Relativity Early Technology
1930'S – 1950'S			
1960'S – 1980'S			
1990'S – Today			

Examination Day
by
Henry Slesar

The Jordans never spoke of the exam, not until their son, Dick, was 12 years old. It was on his birthday that Mrs. Jordan first mentioned the subject in his presence, and the anxious manner of her speech caused her husband to answer sharply.

"Forget about it," he said. "He'll do all right."

They were at the breakfast table, and the boy looked up from his plate curiously. He was an alert-eyed youngster, with flat blond hair and a quick nervous manner. He didn't understand what the sudden tension was about, but he did know that today was his birthday, and he wanted harmony above all.

Somewhere in the little apartment there was wrapped, beribboned packages waiting to be opened. In the tiny wall-kitchen, something warm and sweet was being prepared in the automatic stove. He wanted the day to be happy, and the moistness of his mother's eyes, the scowl of his father's face, spoiled the mood of expectation with which he had greeted the morning.

"What exam?" he asked.

His mother looked at the tablecloth. "It's just a sort of Government intelligence test they give children at the age of twelve. You'll be taking it next week. It's nothing to worry about."

"You mean a test like in school?"

"Something like that," his father said, getting up from the table. "Go read your comic books, Dick."

The boy rose and wandered toward that part of the living room that had been "his" corner since infancy. He fingered the topmost comic of the stack, but seemed uninterested in the colorful squares of fast-paced action. He wandered toward the window and peered gloomily at the veil of mist that shrouded the glass.

"Why did it have to rain today?" he asked. "Why couldn't it rain tomorrow?"

His father, now slumped into an armchair with the Government newspaper, rattled the sheets in vexation. "Because it just did, that's all. Rain makes the grass grow."

"Why, Dad?"

"Because it does, that's all."

Dick puckered his brow. "What makes it green though? The grass?"

"Nobody knows," his father snapped, then immediately regretted his abruptness.

Later in the day, it was birthday time again. His mother beamed as she handed over the gaily-colored packages, and even his father managed a grin and a rumple-of-the-hair. He kissed his mother and shook hands gravely with his father. Then the birthday cake was brought forth, and the ceremonies concluded.

An hour later, seated by the window, he watched the sun force its way between the clouds.

"Dad," he said, "how far away is the sun?"

"Five thousand miles," his father said.

Dick sat at the breakfast table and again saw moisture in his mother's eyes. He didn't connect her tears with the exam until his father suddenly brought the subject to light again.

"Well, Dick," he said, with a manly frown, "you've got an appointment today."

"I know, Dad. I hope ..."

"Now it's nothing to worry about. Thousands of children take this test every day. The Government wants to know how smart you are, Dick. That's all there is to it."

"I get good marks in school," he said hesitantly.

"This is different. This is a special kind of test. They give you this stuff to drink, you see, and then you go into a room where there's a sort of machine ..."

"What stuff to drink?" Dick said.

"It's nothing. It taste like peppermint. It's just to make sure you answer the questions truthfully. Not that the Government thinks you won't tell the truth, but this stuff makes *sure*."

Dick's face showed puzzlement, and a touch of fright. He looked at his mother, and she composed her face into a misty smile.

"Everything will be all right," she said.

"Of course it will," his father agreed. "You're a good boy, Dick; you'll make out fine. Then we'll come home and celebrate. All right?"

"Yes sir," Dick said.

They entered the Government Educational Building fifteen minutes before the appointed hour. They crossed the marble floors of the great, pillared lobby, passed beneath an archway and entered an automatic elevator that brought them to the fourth floor.

There was a young man wearing an insignia-less tunic, seated at a polished desk in front of Room 404. He held a clipboard in his hand, and he checked the list down to the Js and permitted the Jordans to enter.

The room was as cold and official as a courtroom, with long benches flanking metal tables. There were several fathers and sons already there, and a thin-lipped woman with cropped black hair was passing out sheets of paper.

Mr. Jordan filled out the form, and returned it to the clerk. The he told Dick: "It won't be long now. When they call your name, you go through the doorway at that end of the room." He indicated the portal with his finger.

A concealed loudspeaker crackled and called off the first name. Dick saw a boy leave his father's side reluctantly and walk slowly towards the door.

At five minutes of eleven, they called the name of Jordan.

"Good luck, son," his father said, without looking at him. "I'll call for you when the test is over."

Dick walked to the door and turned the knob. The room inside was dim, and he could barely make out the features of the gray-tunicked attendant who greeted him.

"Sit down," the man said softly. He indicated a high stool behind his desk. "Your name's Richard Jordan?"

"Yes sir."

"Your classification number is 600-115. Drink this, Richard."

He lifted a plastic cup from the desk and handed it to the boy. The liquid inside had the consistency of buttermilk, tasted only vaguely of the promised peppermint. Dick downed it, and handed the man the empty cup.

He sat in silence, feeling drowsy, while the man wrote busily on a sheet of paper. Then the attendant looked at his watch, and rose to stand only inches from Dick's face. He unclipped a pen-like object from the pocket of his tunic, and flashed a tiny light into the boy's eyes.

"All right," he said. "Come with me, Richard."

He led Dick to the end of the room, where a single wooden armchair faced a multi-dialed computing machine. There was a microphone on the left arm of the chair, and when the boy sat down, he found its pinpoint head conveniently at his mouth.

"Now just relax, Richard. You'll be asked some questions, and you think them over carefully. Then give your answers into the microphone. The machine will take care of the rest."

"Yes, sir."

"I'll leave you alone now. Whenever you want to start, just say 'ready' into the microphone."

"Yes, sir."

The man squeezed his shoulder, and left.

Dick said, "Ready."

Lights appeared on the machine, and a mechanism whirred. A voice said:

"Complete this sequence. One, four, seven, ten ..."

Mr. and Mrs. Jordan were in the living room, not speaking, not even speculating.

It was almost four o'clock when the telephone rang. The woman tried to reach it first, but her husband was quicker.

"Mr. Jordan?"

The voice was clipped; a brisk, official voice.

"Yes, speaking."

"This is the Government Educational Service. Your son, Richard M. Jordan, Classification 600-115, has completed the Government examination. We regret to inform you that his intelligence quotient has exceeded the Government regulation, according to Rule 84, Section 5, of the New Code."

Across the room, the woman cried out, knowing nothing except the emotion she read on her husbands face.

"You may specify by telephone," the voice droned on, "whether you wish his body interred by the Government or would you prefer a private burial place? The fee for Government burial is ten dollars."

From: Schroeder-Davis, S. (1993). Coercive Egalitarianism: A Study of Discrimination against Gifted Children. Gifted Education Press.

The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas

From *The Wind's Twelve Quarters: Short Stories*
by Ursula Le Guin

With a clamor of bells that set the swallows soaring, the Festival of Summer came to the city Omelas, bright-towered by the sea. The rigging of the boats in harbor sparkled with flags. In the streets between houses with red roofs and painted walls, between old moss-grown gardens and under avenues of trees, past great parks and public buildings, processions moved. Some were decorous: old people in long stiff robes of mauve and grey, grave master workmen, quiet, merry women carrying their babies and chatting as they walked. In other streets the music beat faster, a shimmering of gong and tambourine, and the people went dancing, the procession was a dance. Children dodged in and out, their high calls rising like the swallows' crossing flights, over the music and the singing. All the processions wound towards the north side of the city, where on the great water-meadow called the Green' Fields boys and girls, naked in the bright air, with mud-stained feet and ankles and long, lithe arms, exercised their restive horses before the race. The horses wore no gear at all but a halter without bit. Their manes were braided with streamers of silver, gold, and green. They flared their nostrils and pranced and boasted to one another; they were vastly excited, the horse being the only animal who has adopted our ceremonies as his own. Far off to the north and west the mountains stood up half encircling Omelas on her bay. The air of morning was so clear that the snow still crowning the Eighteen Peaks burned with white-gold fire across the miles of sunlit air, under the dark blue of the sky. There was just enough wind to make the banners that marked the racecourse snap and flutter now and then. In the silence of the broad green meadows one could hear the music winding through the city streets, farther and nearer and ever approaching, a cheerful faint sweetness of the air that from time to time trembled and gathered together and broke out into the great joyous clanging of the bells.

Joyous! How is one to tell about joy? How describe the citizens of Omelas?

They were not simple folk, you see, though they were happy. But we do not say the words of cheer much any more. All smiles have become archaic. Given a description such as this one tends to make certain assumptions. Given a description such as this one tends to look next for the King, mounted on a splendid stallion and surrounded by his noble knights, or perhaps in a golden litter borne by great-muscled slaves. But there was no king. They did not use swords, or keep slaves. They were not barbarians. I do not know the rules and laws of their society, but I suspect that they were singularly few. As they did without monarchy and slavery, so they also got on without the stock exchange, the advertisement, the secret police, and the bomb. Yet I repeat that these were not simple folk, not dulcet shepherds, noble savages, bland utopians. They were not less complex than us. The trouble is that we have a bad habit, encouraged by pedants and sophisticates, of considering happiness as something rather stupid. Only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting. This is the treason of the artist: a refusal to admit the banality of evil and the terrible boredom of pain. If you can't lick 'em, join 'em. If it hurts, repeat it. But to praise despair is to condemn delight, to embrace violence is to lose hold of everything else. We have almost lost hold; we can no longer describe a happy man, nor make any celebration of joy. How can I tell you about the people of Omelas? They were not naive and happy children – though their children were, in fact, happy. They were mature, intelligent, passionate adults whose lives were not wretched. O miracle! but I wish I could describe it better. I wish I could convince you.

Omelas sounds in my words like a city in a fairy tale, long ago and far away, once upon a time. Perhaps it would be best if you imagined it as your own fancy bids, assuming it will rise to the occasion, for certainly I cannot suit you all. For instance, how about technology? I think that there would be no cars or helicopters in and above the streets; this follows from the fact that the people of Omelas are happy people. Happiness is based on a just discrimination of what is necessary, what is neither necessary nor destructive, and what is destructive. In the middle category, however – that of the unnecessary but undestructive, that of comfort, luxury, exuberance, etc. -- they could perfectly well have central heating, subway trains,. washing machines, and all kinds of marvelous devices not yet invented here, floating light-sources, fuelless power, a cure for the common cold. Or they could have none of that: it doesn't matter. As you like it. I incline to think that people from towns up and down the coast have been coming in to Omelas during the last days before the Festival on very fast little trains and double-decked trams, and that the train station of Omelas is actually the handsomest building in town, though plainer than the magnificent Farmers' Market. But even granted trains, I fear that Omelas so far strikes some of you as goody-goody. Smiles, bells, parades, horses, bleh. If so, please add an orgy. If an orgy would help, don't hesitate. Let us not, however, have temples from which issue beautiful nude priests and priestesses already half in ecstasy and ready to copulate with any man or woman, lover or stranger who desires union with the deep godhead of the blood, although that was my first idea. But really it would be better not to have any temples in Omelas – at least, not manned temples. Religion yes, clergy no. Surely the beautiful nudes can just wander about, offering themselves like divine souffles to the hunger of the needy and the rapture of the flesh. Let them join the processions. Let tambourines be struck above the copulations, and the glory of desire be proclaimed upon the gongs, and (a not unimportant point) let the offspring of these delightful rituals be beloved and looked after by all. One thing I know there is none of in Omelas is guilt. But what else should there be? I thought at first there were no drugs, but that is puritanical. For those who like it, the faint insistent sweetness of *drooz* may perfume the ways of the city, *drooz* which first brings a great lightness and brilliance to the mind and limbs, and then after some hours a dreamy languor, and wonderful visions at last of the very arcana and inmost secrets of the Universe, as well as exciting the pleasure of sex beyond all belief; and it is not habit-forming. For more modest tastes I think there ought to be beer. What else, what else belongs in the joyous city? The sense of victory, surely, the celebration of courage. But as we did without clergy, let us do without soldiers. The joy built upon successful slaughter is not the right kind of joy; it will not do; it is fearful and it is trivial. A boundless and generous contentment, a magnanimous triumph felt not against some outer enemy but in communion with the finest and fairest in the souls of all men everywhere and the splendor of the world's summer; this is what swells the hearts of the people of Omelas, and the victory they celebrate is that of life. I really don't think many of them need to take *drooz*.

Most of the processions have reached the Green Fields by now. A marvelous smell of cooking goes forth from the red and blue tents of the provisioners. The faces of small children are amiably sticky; in the benign grey beard of a man a couple of crumbs of rich pastry are entangled. The youths and girls have mounted their horses and are beginning to group around the starting line of the course. An old woman, small, fat, and laughing, is passing out flowers from a basket, and tall young men, wear her flowers in their shining hair. A child of nine or ten sits at the edge of the crowd, alone, playing on a wooden flute. People pause to listen, and they smile, but they do not speak to him, for he never ceases playing and never sees them, his dark eyes wholly rapt in the sweet, thin magic of the tune.

He finishes, and slowly lowers his hands holding the wooden flute.

As if that little private silence were the signal, all at once a trumpet sounds from the pavilion near the starting line: imperious, melancholy, piercing. The horses rear on their slender legs, and some of them neigh in answer. Sober-faced, the young riders stroke the horses' necks and soothe them, whispering, "Quiet, quiet, there my beauty, my hope. . . ." They begin to form in rank along the starting line. The crowds along the racecourse are like a field of grass and flowers in the wind. The Festival of Summer has begun.

Do you believe? Do you accept the festival, the city, the joy? No? Then let me describe one more thing.

In a basement under one of the beautiful public buildings of Omelas, or perhaps in the cellar of one of its spacious private homes, there is a room. It has one locked door, and no window. A little light seeps in dustily between cracks in the boards, secondhand from a cobwebbed window somewhere across the cellar. In one corner of the little room a couple of mops, with stiff, clotted, foul-smelling heads, stand near a rusty bucket. The floor is dirt, a little damp to the touch, as cellar dirt usually is. The room is about three paces long and two wide: a mere broom closet or disused tool room. In the room a child is sitting. It could be a boy or a girl. It looks about six, but actually is nearly ten. It is feeble-minded. Perhaps it was born defective or perhaps it has become imbecile through fear, malnutrition, and neglect. It picks its nose and occasionally fumbles vaguely with its toes or genitals, as it sits haunched in the corner farthest from the bucket and the two mops. It is afraid of the mops. It finds them horrible. It shuts its eyes, but it knows the mops are still standing there; and the door is locked; and nobody will come. The door is always locked; and nobody ever comes, except that sometimes-the child has no understanding of time or interval – sometimes the door rattles terribly and opens, and a person, or several people, are there. One of them may come and kick the child to make it stand up. The others never come close, but peer in at it with frightened, disgusted eyes. The food bowl and the water jug are hastily filled, the door is locked, the eyes disappear. The people at the door never say anything, but the child, who has not always lived in the tool room, and can remember sunlight and its mother's voice, sometimes speaks. "I will be good," it says. "Please let me out. I will be good!" They never answer. The child used to scream for help at night, and cry a good deal, but now it only makes a kind of whining, "eh-haa, eh-haa," and it speaks less and less often. It is so thin there are no calves to its legs; its belly protrudes; it lives on a half-bowl of corn meal and grease a day. It is naked. Its buttocks and thighs are a mass of festered sores, as it sits in its own excrement continually.

They all know it is there, all the people of Omelas. Some of them have come to see it, others are content merely to know it is there. They all know that it has to be there. Some of them understand why, and some do not, but they all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships, the health of their children, the wisdom of their scholars, the skill of their makers, even the abundance of their harvest and the kindly weathers of their skies, depend wholly on this child's abominable misery.

This is usually explained to children when they are between eight and twelve, whenever they seem capable of understanding; and most of those who come to see the child are young people, though often enough an adult comes, or comes back, to see the child. No matter how well

the matter has been explained to them, these young spectators are always shocked and sickened at the sight. They feel disgust, which they had thought themselves superior to. They feel anger, outrage, impotence, despite all the explanations. They would like to do something for the child. But there is nothing they can do. If the child were brought up into the sunlight out of that vile place, if it were cleaned and fed and comforted, that would be a good thing, indeed; but if it were done, in that day and hour all the prosperity and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed. Those are the terms. To exchange all the goodness and grace of every life in Omelas for that single, small improvement: to throw away the happiness of thousands for the chance of the happiness of one: that would be to let guilt within the walls indeed.

The terms are strict and absolute; there may not even be a kind word spoken to the child.

Often the young people go home in tears, or in a tearless rage, when they have seen the child and faced this terrible paradox. They may brood over it for weeks or years. But as time goes on they begin to realize that even if the child could be released, it would not get much good of its freedom: a little vague pleasure of warmth and food, no doubt, but little more. It is too degraded and imbecile to know any real joy. It has been afraid too long ever to be free of fear. Its habits are too uncouth for it to respond to humane treatment. Indeed, after so long it would probably be wretched without walls about it to protect it, and darkness for its eyes, and its own excrement to sit in. Their tears at the bitter injustice dry when they begin to perceive the terrible justice of reality, and to accept it. Yet it is their tears and anger, the trying of their generosity and the acceptance of their helplessness, which are perhaps the true source of the splendor of their lives. Theirs is no vapid, irresponsible happiness. They know that they, like the child, are not free. They know compassion. It is the existence of the child, and their knowledge of its existence, that makes possible the nobility of their architecture, the poignancy of their music, the profundity of their science. It is because of the child that they are so gentle with children. They know that if the wretched one were not there snivelling in the dark, the other one, the flute-player, could make no joyful music as the young riders line up in their beauty for the race in the sunlight of the first morning of summer.

Now do you believe in them? Are they not more credible? But there is one more thing to tell, and this is quite incredible.

At times one of the adolescent girls or boys who go to see the child does not go home to weep or rage, does not, in fact, go home at all. Sometimes also a man or woman much older falls silent for a day or two, and then leaves home. These people go out into the street, and walk down the street alone. They keep walking, and walk straight out of the city of Omelas, through the beautiful gates. They keep walking across the farmlands of Omelas. Each one goes alone, youth or girl man or woman. Night falls; the traveler must pass down village streets, between the houses with yellow-lit windows, and on out into the darkness of the fields. Each alone, they go west or north, towards the mountains. They go on. They leave Omelas, they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back. The place they go towards is a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness. I cannot describe it at all. It is possible that it does not exist. But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas.

Themes

"The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" is the story of a Utopian society whose survival depends on the existence of a child who is locked in a small room and mistreated. Although all of the citizens of Omelas are aware of the child's situation, most of them accept that their happiness is dependent on the child's "abominable misery." Sometimes, however, a few people, after visiting the child and seeing the deplorable conditions under which it lives, leave Omelas forever.

Morals and Morality

One of the major themes in "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" is morality. Le Guin once wrote in a preface to the story that it is a critique of American moral life. She also explained the story's subtitle, "Variations on a Theme by William James," noting that she was inspired to write the story by something James, an American psychologist and philosopher, stated in his "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life": "[If people could be] kept permanently happy on the one simple condition that a certain lost soul on the far-off edge of things should lead a life of lonely torment,. . .how hideous a thing would be [the enjoyment of this happiness] when deliberately accepted as the fruit of such a bargain." Although James believed people would not accept such a bargain, Le Guin presents in "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" a society that does just that so that she can explore the reasons why people avoid or renounce moral responsibility. In fact, the few people who do choose to leave Omelas after seeing the child are hardly noticed, and their act of protest is not understood by the people or the narrator.

As a political allegory, a story in which characters represent things or ideas to covey a political message, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" also addresses the morality underlying political systems. The child has been said to represent the underclass in capitalistic Western societies, particularly the United States, as well as the underdeveloped countries of the Third World. In both cases, poor, underprivileged people are often exploited and overlooked by the wealthy and prosperous. Therefore, Le Guin explores the moral accountability of a society where the happiness of the majority rests on the misery of a powerless minority.

Finally, Le Guin examines the moral responsibility of writers and readers by composing a story in which the narrator tries to entice the reader into taking part in the creation of Omelas. Because the reader is told to imagine Omelas "as your fancy bids," the reader is lulled into accepting Omelas and the horrible premise on which it is founded. Therefore, the reader, like the citizens of Omelas, can either accept the society or reject it out of moral indignation.

Victims and Victimization

Closely related to the theme of morality is the theme of victimization, which is the act of oppressing, harming, or killing an individual or group. In this story, the victim, the child, is a scapegoat — it is sacrificed, the narrator states, so the other citizens of Omelas can live in happiness and peace. However, the narrator gives no good, rational explanation of how this situation came about, who set the terms, or how it is enforced, stating only that "if the child were brought up into the sunlight out of the vile place, if it were cleaned and comforted, that would be a good thing, indeed; but if it were done, in that day and hour all the prosperity and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed. Those are the terms. To exchange all the goodness and grace of every life in Omelas for that single, small improvement." Critics have said this lack of a rational explanation adds to the moral conflict of the story because readers are unable to fully understand why a scapegoat is necessary for Omelas to continue to exist.

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Guilt and Innocence

Le Guin also addresses guilt and innocence in "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas." Although the narrator states that there is no guilt in Omelas, the reactions of the citizens to the child's condition seem to suggest otherwise. For example, the narrator says that many people, after going to view the child, are "shocked and sickened at the sight. They feel disgust. . . . They feel anger, outrage, impotence, despite all the explanations. They would like to do something for the child. But there is nothing they can do." The few people who choose to leave Omelas because they cannot accept the situation on which the society rests also, presumably, feel guilt. But the narrator is unable to fathom such a reaction and merely states, "I cannot describe it at all."

Happiness

Because "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" is an example of Utopian literature, a type of fiction that depicts seemingly perfect societies, it also examines the meaning and consequences of happiness. Toward the beginning of the story, the narrator tries to explain why people are unable to accept happiness: "The trouble is that we have a bad habit, encouraged by pedants and sophisticates, of considering happiness as something rather stupid. Only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting. . . . But to praise despair is to condemn delight, to embrace violence is to lose hold of everything else. We have almost lost hold, we can no longer describe a happy man, nor make any celebration of joy." Since there is some truth to such statements, Le Guin causes the reader to wonder if people do, in fact, reject happiness as something "rather stupid" because they are too critical and pessimistic to believe true happiness can exist. This only further entices the reader to accept Omelas and, in turn, the possibility of Utopian societies despite the negative consequences.

Topics for Further Study

- Research William James's philosophy of pragmatism, which inspired Le Guin to write "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas." Do you think that she agrees with his ideas of happiness in society? Why or why not?
- A kibbutz is a communal farm in Israel. Investigate the style of living and the beliefs of the people who live in a kibbutz. How does this compare with the way the people of Omelas live?
- Give some examples from present-day society in which the well-being of a few must be sacrificed for the good of the whole.

TEXT STUDY: *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*

Central Themes	What attitudes are expressed towards this theme?	How has this theme been conveyed? [Refer to a range of narrative and prose conventions]	Why has this technique been used in this way?
Morals and Morality			
Victims and Victimisation			
Guilt and Innocence			
Happiness			

Critical Analysis: "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"

Posted on **2008-01-18** by **richardxthripp**

The first entry in my new essays section. The story of Omelas is a fascinating classic, and I recommend it for anyone who likes to think.

A Critical Analysis of "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" a short, fictional story by Ursula Le Guin. Question-and-answer format. Text included. Essay and annotation by Richard X. Thripp.
2008-01-18 — http://richardxthripp.thripp.com/essays/
PDF version, with an annotated copy of the text (1.3MB).

Question One: What is a utopia? Does Omelas meet the definition?
Omelas is a utopia, though not of the lifeless type that the word inspires. Le Guin notes that the inhabitants are not "bland utopians," not "simple folk," nor "dulcet shepherds" (2). The residents need not live simply—there can be all sorts of luxuries, wondrous technologies, drugs, beer, and orgies in the streets, because their happiness is not based on possessions, but rather, "a just discrimination of what is necessary," "what is destructive," and what is neither (2). This insight is the definition of a utopia; when everyone knows it, wars, slavery, and competition is not needed (2-3). The children are happy, and the adults, "mature, intelligent, [and] passionate" (2), with no need for a hierarchal church or government (2-3). The city is beautiful, the weather and harvests are kind and abundant, and most everyone healthy (5), yet this is just the icing on the cake. It is indeed a utopia, for all except the suffering child (4-5).

Question Two: What is the narrator's opinion of Omelas?
Our narrator sympathizes with the citizens of Omelas, even going so far as to name the child's plight as the source of all compassion in the town. "There is no vapid, irresponsible happiness"; all the residents know that "they, like the child, are not free" from the "terrible justice of reality" (6)—that one human, just as important as any other, must be dehumanized for the democratic benefit of the majority. Knowing of the child "makes possible the nobility of their architecture, the poignancy of their music, the profundity of their science" (6); it drives and inspires, gives compassion and robs the people of their innocence. "To throw away the happiness of thousands for the chance of the happiness of one: that would be to let guilt within the walls indeed," Le Guin reasons (6). The few that leave, leave without incident, in the dead of night never to return, as their quite protest, going "through the beautiful gates" and farmlands, "to a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness" (7). The narrator seems to find the dilemma at Omelas to be acceptable, as he calls those who leave "incredible" (6), saying that he "cannot describe it at all," but "they seem to know where they are going" (7). His opinion, like the adults in Omelas, is that idealism must yield to pragmatism; it is too much to ask for everyone to give up the niceties to save one person from a life of torture and suffering.

Question Three: What is the symbolic connotation of the locked, windowless cellar in which the lone child suffers?

The forsaken child is the rotten foundation which their beautiful society rests on. In the iconic words of Honoré de Balzac, "behind every great fortune there is a crime," and the crime here is that the utopia of Omelas is supported on strict terms: "there may not even be a kind word spoken to the child" (6), lest he be pulled, even for a second, out of his "abominable misery" (5). Children learn the terrible fact between eight and twelve, and no matter how well their parents explain and justify it in advance, the new discovery is sickening and angering (5). It may take months or years, but they will come to accept the torture of one for the benefit of the many—pragmatism will rule over whatever ideals they once held, as they know that the very hour they would save the child, "all the prosperity and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed" (6). Quite a price indeed. We have ethical dilemmas in the real world that are similar yet more murky, such as euthanasia for the hopelessly ill and elderly, triaging in disasters and on the battleground (not every limb, person, or finger can be saved), and wars that are supposably1 fought for the good of the world, but result in millions of deaths and injuries. The story of Omelas symbolizes them all, and as in all such systems, there are some who "walk straight out of the city" (7), never to return, unwilling to bear the guilt. Others gain peace of mind by deciding that the lost child could not possibly be human. He or she is sub-human, and is instead referred to as "it" (4-6), "too degraded and imbecile to know any real joy" (6), and thus the crime is just.

Question Four: In the story, do you find any implied criticism of our own society?

Le Guin criticizes "a bad habit" that trickles down from the "pedants and sophisticates" (2), the classy intellectuals that teach us to celebrate pain over pleasure, violence over peace, and despair over delight. We are taught that "happiness [is] something rather stupid," while the "banality of evil and the terrible boredom of pain" (2) is replaced by fascination with death, deviance, and necromancy. A utopia is a backwards kingdom filled with happy, simple-minded subjects. In the real utopia, there are no careless princesses to be rescued by valiant princes, no arch-bishops to create the newest refinements to an oppressive religion, and no misguided soldiers to fight bloody wars in the name of freedom. You can be happy and peaceful without being a naïve, passionless simpleton. When we come to believe that "only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting," we have come to "lose hold of everything else" (2). No technological wonders can provide happiness when our thinking is collectively flawed. "Joy built upon successful slaughter" will not do; we must be joyous like the citizens of Omelas, where "the victory they celebrate is that of life" (3), and not of death and suffering.

This entry was posted in Scholarly Essays and tagged critical analysis, fiction, q&a by richardxthripp. Bookmark the permalink.

George Orwell

Nineteen Eighty Four

Chapter 1

PART ONE

I

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours. It was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.

Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of pig-iron. The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely. He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the meagreness of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the Party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine, his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended.

Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black-moustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOC. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was the police patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.

Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig-iron and the overfulfilment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live – did live, from habit that became instinct – in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.

Winston kept his back turned to the telescreen. It was safer; though, as he well knew, even a back can be revealing. A kilometre away the Ministry of Truth, his place of work, towered vast and white above the grimy landscape. This, he thought with a sort of vague distaste – this was London, chief city of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the provinces of Oceania. He tried to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been quite like this. Were there always these vistas of rotting nineteenth-century houses, their sides

shored up with baulks of timber, their windows patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron, their crazy garden walls sagging in all directions? And the bombed sites where the plaster dust swirled in the air and the willow-herb straggled over the heaps of rubble; and the places where the bombs had cleared a larger patch and there had sprung up sordid colonies of wooden dwellings like chicken-houses? But it was no use, he could not remember: nothing remained of his childhood except a series of bright-lit tableaux, occurring against no background and mostly unintelligible.

The Ministry of Truth – Minitrue, in Newspeak * – was startlingly different from any other object in sight. It was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, 300 metres into the air. From where Winston stood it was just possible to read, picked out on its white face in elegant lettering, the three slogans of the Party:

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

The Ministry of Truth contained, it was said, three thousand rooms above ground level, and corresponding ramifications below. Scattered about London there were just three other buildings of similar appearance and size. So completely did they dwarf the surrounding architecture that from the roof of Victory Mansions you could see all four of them simultaneously. They were the homes of the four Ministries between which the entire apparatus of government was divided. The Ministry of Truth, which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education, and the fine arts. The Ministry of Peace, which concerned itself with war. The Ministry of Love, which maintained law and order. And the Ministry of Plenty, which was responsible for economic affairs. Their names, in Newspeak: Minitrue, Minipax, Miniluv, and Miniplenty.

The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one. There were no windows in it at all. Winston had never been inside the Ministry of Love, nor within half a kilometre of it. It was a place impossible to enter except on official business, and then only by penetrating through a maze of barbed-wire entanglements, steel

* Newspeak was the official language of Oceania. For an account of its structure and etymology see Appendix.

doors, and hidden machine-gun nests. Even the streets leading up to its outer barriers were roamed by gorilla-faced guards in black uniforms, armed with jointed truncheons.

Winston turned round abruptly. He had set his features into the expression of quiet optimism which it was advisable to wear when facing the telescreen. He crossed the room into the tiny kitchen. By leaving the Ministry at this time of day he had sacrificed his lunch in the canteen, and he was aware that there was no food in the kitchen except a hunk of dark-coloured bread which had got to be saved for to-morrow's breakfast. 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. He took a cigarette from a crumpled packet marked VICTORY CIGARETTES and incautiously held it upright, whereupon the tobacco fell out on to the floor. With the next he was more successful. He went back to the living-room and sat down at a small table that stood to the left of the telescreen. From the table drawer he took out a penholder, a bottle of ink, and a thick, quarto-sized blank book with a red back and a marbled cover.

For some reason the telescreen in the living-room was in an unusual position. Instead of being placed, as was normal, in the end wall, where it could command the whole room, it was in the longer wall, opposite the window. To one side of it there was a shallow alcove in which Winston was now sitting, and which, when the flats were built, had probably been intended to hold bookshelves. By sitting in the alcove, and keeping well back, Winston was able to remain outside the range of the telescreen, so far as sight went. He could be heard, of course, but so long as he stayed in his present position he could not be seen. It was partly the unusual geography of the room that had suggested to him the thing that he was now about to do.

But it had also been suggested by the book that he had just taken out of the drawer. It was a peculiarly beautiful book. Its

smooth creamy paper, a little yellowed by age, was of a kind that had not been manufactured for at least forty years past. He could guess, however, that the book was much older than that. He had seen it lying in the window of a frowsy little junk-shop in a slummy quarter of the town (just what quarter he did not now remember) and had been stricken immediately by an overwhelming desire to possess it. Party members were supposed not to go into ordinary shops ('dealing on the free market', it was called), but the rule was not strictly kept, because there were various things, such as shoelaces and razor blades, which it was impossible to get hold of in any other way. He had given a quick glance up and down the street and then had slipped inside and bought the book for two dollars fifty. At the time he was not conscious of wanting it for any particular purpose. He had carried it guiltily home in his brief-case. Even with nothing written in it, it was a compromising possession.

The thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. This was not illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least by twenty-five years in a forced-labour camp. Winston fitted a nib into the penholder and sucked it to get the grease off. The pen was an archaic instrument, seldom used even for signatures, and he had procured one, furtively and with some difficulty, simply because of a feeling that the beautiful creamy paper deserved to be written on with a real nib instead of being scratched with an ink-pencil. Actually he was not used to writing by hand. Apart from very short notes, it was usual to dictate everything into the speak-write, which was of course impossible for his present purpose. He dipped the pen into the ink and then faltered for just a second. A tremor had gone through his bowels. To mark the paper was the decisive act. In small clumsy letters he wrote:

April 4th, 1984.

He sat back. A sense of complete helplessness had descended upon him. To begin with, he did not know with any certainty that this *was* 1984. It must be round about that date, since he was fairly sure that his age was thirty-nine, and he believed that he had been born in 1944 or 1945; but it was never possible nowadays to pin down any date within a year or two.

For whom, it suddenly occurred to him to wonder, was he writing this diary? For the future, for the unborn. His mind hovered for a moment round the doubtful date on the page, and then fetched up with a bump against the Newspeak word *doublethink*. For the first time the magnitude of what he had undertaken came home to him. How could you communicate with the future? It was of its nature impossible. Either the future would resemble the present, in which case it would not listen to him: or it would be different from it, and his predicament would be meaningless.

For some time he sat gazing stupidly at the paper. The telescreen had changed over to strident military music. It was curious that he seemed not merely to have lost the power of expressing himself, but even to have forgotten what it was that he had originally intended to say. For weeks past he had been making ready for this moment, and it had never crossed his mind that anything would be needed except courage. The actual writing would be easy. All he had to do was to transfer to paper the interminable restless monologue that had been running inside his head, literally for years. At this moment, however, even the monologue had dried up. Moreover his varicose ulcer had begun itching unbearably. He dared not scratch it, because if he did so it always became inflamed. The seconds were ticking by. He was conscious of nothing except the blankness of the page in front of him, the itching of the skin above his ankle, the blaring of the music, and a slight booziness caused by the gin.

Suddenly he began writing in sheer panic, only imperfectly aware of what he was setting down. His small but childish handwriting straggled up and down the page, shedding first its capital letters and finally even its full stops:

April 4th, 1984. Last night to the flicks. All war films. One very good one of a ship full of refugees being bombed somewhere in the Mediterranean. Audience much amused by shots of a great huge fat man trying to swim away with a helicopter after him, first you saw him wallowing along in the water like a porpoise, then you saw him through the helicopters gunsights, then he was full of holes and the sea round him turned pink and he sank as suddenly as though the holes had let in the water. audience shouting with laughter when he sank. then you saw a lifeboat full of children with a helicopter hovering over it. there was a middle-aged woman

might have been a jewess sitting up in the bow with a little boy about three years old in her arms. little boy screaming with fright and hiding his head between her breasts as if he was trying to burrow right into her and the woman putting her arms round him and comforting him although she was blue with fright herself, all the time covering him up as much as possible as if she thought her arms could keep the bullets off him. then the helicopter planted a 20 kilo bomb in among them terrific flash and the boat went all to matchwood. then there was a wonderful shot of a child's arm going up up up right up into the air a helicopter with a camera in its nose must have followed it up and there was a lot of applause from the party seats but a woman down in the prole part of the house suddenly started kicking up a fuss and shouting they didnt oughter of showed it not in front of kids they didnt it aint right not in front of kids it aint until the police turned her turned her out i dont suppose anything happened to her nobody cares what the proles say typical prole reaction they never – –

Winston stopped writing, partly because he was suffering from cramp. He did not know what had made him pour out this stream of rubbish. But the curious thing was that while he was doing so a totally different memory had clarified itself in his mind, to the point where he almost felt equal to writing it down. It was, he now realized, because of this other incident that he had suddenly decided to come home and begin the diary to-day.

It had happened that morning at the Ministry, if anything so nebulous could be said to happen.

It was nearly eleven hundred, and in the Records Department, where Winston worked, they were dragging the chairs out of the cubicles and grouping them in the centre of the hall opposite the big telescreen, in preparation for the Two Minutes Hate. Winston was just taking his place in one of the middle rows when two people whom he knew by sight, but had never spoken to, came unexpectedly into the room. One of them was a girl whom he often passed in the corridors. He did not know her name, but he knew that she worked in the Fiction Department. Presumably – since he had sometimes seen her with oily hands and carrying a spanner – she had some mechanical job on one of the novel-writing machines. She was a bold-looking girl, of about twenty-seven, with thick dark hair, a freckled face, and swift, athletic movements. A

narrow scarlet sash, emblem of the Junior Anti-Sex League, was wound several times round the waist of her overalls, just tightly enough to bring out the shapeliness of her hips. Winston had disliked her from the very first moment of seeing her. He knew the reason. It was because of the atmosphere of hockey-fields and cold baths and community hikes and general clean-mindedness which she managed to carry about with her. He disliked nearly all women, and especially the young and pretty ones. It was always the women, and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted adherents of the Party, the swallowers of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers-out of unorthodoxy. But this particular girl gave him the impression of being more dangerous than most. Once when they passed in the corridor she had given him a quick sidelong glance which seemed to pierce right into him and for a moment had filled him with black terror. The idea had even crossed his mind that she might be an agent of the Thought Police. That, it was true, was very unlikely. Still, he continued to feel a peculiar uneasiness, which had fear mixed up in it as well as hostility, whenever she was anywhere near him.

The other person was a man named O'Brien, a member of the Inner Party and holder of some post so important and remote that Winston had only a dim idea of its nature. A momentary hush passed over the group of people round the chairs as they saw the black overalls of an Inner Party member approaching. O'Brien was a large, burly man with a thick neck and a coarse, humorous, brutal face. In spite of his formidable appearance he had a certain charm of manner. He had a trick of resettling his spectacles on his nose which was curiously disarming – in some indefinable way, curiously civilized. It was a gesture which, if anyone had still thought in such terms, might have recalled an eighteenth-century nobleman offering his snuffbox. Winston had seen O'Brien perhaps a dozen times in almost as many years. He felt deeply drawn to him, and not solely because he was intrigued by the contrast between O'Brien's urbane manner and his prize-fighter's physique. Much more it was because of a secretly-held belief – or perhaps not even a belief, merely a hope – that O'Brien's political orthodoxy was not perfect. Something in his face suggested it irresistibly. And again, perhaps it was not even unorthodoxy that was written in his face, but simply intelligence. But at any rate he had the appearance of being a person that you could talk to if some-

how you could cheat the telescreen and get him alone. Winston had never made the smallest effort to verify this guess: indeed, there was no way of doing so. At this moment O'Brien glanced at his wrist watch, saw that it was nearly eleven hundred, and evidently decided to stay in the Records Department until the Two Minutes Hate was over. He took a chair in the same row as Winston, a couple of places away. A small, sandy-haired woman who worked in the next cubicle to Winston was between them. The girl with dark hair was sitting immediately behind.

The next moment a hideous, grinding speech, as of some monstrous machine running without oil, burst from the big telescreen at the end of the room. It was a noise that set one's teeth on edge and bristled the hair at the back of one's neck. The Hate had started.

As usual, the face of Emmanuel Goldstein, the Enemy of the People, had flashed on to the screen. There were hisses here and there among the audience. The little sandy-haired woman gave a squeak of mingled fear and disgust. Goldstein was the renegade and backslider who once, long ago (how long ago, nobody quite remembered), had been one of the leading figures of the Party, almost on a level with Big Brother himself, and then had engaged in counter-revolutionary activities, had been condemned to death, and had mysteriously escaped and disappeared. The programmes of the Two Minutes Hate varied from day to day, but there was none in which Goldstein was not the principal figure. He was the primal traitor, the earliest defiler of the Party's purity. All subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies, deviations, sprang directly out of his teaching. Somewhere or other he was still alive and hatching his conspiracies: perhaps somewhere beyond the sea, under the protection of his foreign paymasters, perhaps even – so it was occasionall rumoured – in some hiding-place in Oceania itself.

Winston's diaphragm was constricted. He could never see the face of Goldstein without a painful mixture of emotions. It was a lean Jewish face, with a great fuzzy aureole of white hair and a small goatee beard – a clever face, and yet somehow inherently despicable, with a kind of senile silliness in the long thin nose, near the end of which a pair of spectacles was perched. It resembled the face of a sheep, and the voice, too, had a sheep-like quality. Goldstein was delivering his usual venomous attack upon the doctrines

of the Party – an attack so exaggerated and perverse that a child should have been able to see through it, and yet just plausible enough to fill one with an alarmed feeling that other people, less level-headed than oneself, might be taken in by it. He was abusing Big Brother, he was denouncing the dictatorship of the Party, he was demanding the immediate conclusion of peace with Eurasia, he was advocating freedom of speech, freedom of the Press, freedom of assembly, freedom of thought, he was crying hysterically that the revolution had been betrayed – and all this in rapid polysyllabic speech which was a sort of parody of the habitual style of the orators of the Party, and even contained Newspeak words: more Newspeak words, indeed, than any Party member would normally use in real life. And all the while, lest one should be in any doubt as to the reality which Goldstein's specious claptrap covered, behind his head on the telescreen there marched the endless columns of the Eurasian army – row after row of solid-looking men with expressionless Asiatic faces, who swam up to the surface of the screen and vanished, to be replaced by others exactly similar. The dull rhythmic tramp of the soldiers' boots formed the background to Goldstein's bleating voice.

Before the Hate had proceeded for thirty seconds, uncontrollable exclamations of rage were breaking out from half the people in the room. The self-satisfied sheep-like face on the screen, and the terrifying power of the Eurasian army behind it, were too much to be borne: besides, the sight or even the thought of Goldstein produced fear and anger automatically. He was an object of hatred more constant than either Eurasia or Eastasia, since when Oceania was at war with one of these Powers it was generally at peace with the other. But what was strange was that although Goldstein was hated and despised by everybody, although every day and a thousand times a day, on platforms, on the telescreen, in newspapers, in books, his theories were refuted, smashed, ridiculed, held up to the general gaze for the pitiful rubbish that they were – in spite of all this, his influence never seemed to grow less. Always there were fresh dupes waiting to be seduced by him. A day never passed when spies and saboteurs acting under his directions were not unmasked by the Thought Police. He was the commander of a vast shadowy army, an underground network of conspirators dedicated to the overthrow of the State. The Brotherhood, its name was supposed to be. There were also whispered

stories of a terrible book, a compendium of all the heresies, of which Goldstein was the author and which circulated clandestinely here and there. It was a book without a title. People referred to it, if at all, simply as *the book*. But one knew of such things only through vague rumours. Neither the Brotherhood nor *the book* was a subject that any ordinary Party member would mention if there was a way of avoiding it.

In its second minute the Hate rose to a frenzy. People were leaping up and down in their places and shouting at the tops of their voices in an effort to drown the maddening bleating voice that came from the screen. The little sandy-haired woman had turned bright pink, and her mouth was opening and shutting like that of a landed fish. Even O'Brien's heavy face was flushed. He was sitting very straight in his chair, his powerful chest swelling and quivering as though he were standing up to the assault of a wave. The dark-haired girl behind Winston had begun crying out 'Swine! Swine! Swine!' and suddenly she picked up a heavy Newspeak dictionary and flung it at the screen. It struck Goldstein's nose and bounced off; the voice continued inexorably. In a lucid moment Winston found that he was shouting with the others and kicking his heel violently against the rung of his chair. The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but, on the contrary, that it was impossible to avoid joining in. Within thirty seconds any pretence was always unnecessary. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge-hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic. And yet the rage that one felt was an abstract, undirected emotion which could be switched from one object to another like the flame of a blowlamp. Thus, at one moment Winston's hatred was not turned against Goldstein at all, but, on the contrary, against Big Brother, the Party, and the Thought Police; and at such moments his heart went out to the lonely, derided heretic on the screen, sole guardian of truth and sanity in a world of lies. And yet the very next instant he was at one with the people about him, and all that was said of Goldstein seemed to him to be true. At those moments his secret loathing of Big Brother changed into adoration, and Big Brother seemed to tower up, an invincible, fearless protector, standing like a rock against the hordes of Asia,

and Goldstein, in spite of his isolation, his helplessness, and the doubt that hung about his very existence, seemed like some sinister enchanter, capable by the mere power of his voice of wrecking the structure of civilization.

It was even possible, at moments, to switch one's hatred this way or that by a voluntary act. Suddenly, by the sort of violent effort with which one wrenches one's head away from the pillow in a nightmare, Winston succeeded in transferring his hatred from the face on the screen to the dark-haired girl behind him. Vivid, beautiful hallucinations flashed through his mind. He would flog her to death with a rubber truncheon. He would tie her naked to a stake and shoot her full of arrows like Saint Sebastian. He would ravish her and cut her throat at the moment of climax. Better than before, moreover, he realized *why* it was that he hated her. He hated her because she was young and pretty and sexless, because he wanted to go to bed with her and would never do so, because round her sweet supple waist, which seemed to ask you to encircle it with your arm, there was only the odious scarlet sash, aggressive symbol of chastity.

The Hate rose to its climax. The voice of Goldstein had become an actual sheep's bleat, and for an instant the face changed into that of a sheep. Then the sheep-face melted into the figure of a Eurasian soldier who seemed to be advancing, huge and terrible, his sub-machine gun roaring, and seeming to spring out of the surface of the screen, so that some of the people in the front row actually flinched backwards in their seats. But in the same moment, drawing a deep sigh of relief from everybody, the hostile figure melted into the face of Big Brother, black-haired, black-moustachio'd, full of power and mysterious calm, and so vast that it almost filled up the screen. Nobody heard what Big Brother was saying. It was merely a few words of encouragement, the sort of words that are uttered in the din of battle, not distinguishable individually but restoring confidence by the fact of being spoken. Then the face of Big Brother faded away again, and instead the three slogans of the Party stood out in bold capitals:

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

But the face of Big Brother seemed to persist for several seconds

on the screen, as though the impact that it had made on everyone's eyeballs was too vivid to wear off immediately. The little sandy-haired woman had flung herself forward over the back of the chair in front of her. With a tremulous murmur that sounded like 'My Saviour!' she extended her arms towards the screen. Then she buried her face in her hands. It was apparent that she was uttering a prayer.

At this moment the entire group of people broke into a deep, slow, rhythmical chant of 'B-B! ... B-B! ... B-B!' – over and over again, very slowly, with a long pause between the first 'B' and the second – a heavy, murmurous sound, somehow curiously savage, in the background of which one seemed to hear the stamp of naked feet and the throbbing of tom-toms. For perhaps as much as thirty seconds they kept it up. It was a refrain that was often heard in moments of overwhelming emotion. Partly it was a sort of hymn to the wisdom and majesty of Big Brother, but still more it was an act of self-hypnosis, a deliberate drowning of consciousness by means of rhythmic noise. Winston's entrails seemed to grow cold. In the Two Minutes Hate he could not help sharing in the general delirium, but this sub-human chanting of 'B-B! ... B-B!' always filled him with horror. Of course he chanted with the rest: it was impossible to do otherwise. To dissemble your feelings, to control your face, to do what everyone else was doing, was an instinctive reaction. But there was a space of a couple of seconds during which the expression in his eyes might conceivably have betrayed him. And it was exactly at this moment that the significant thing happened – if, indeed, it did happen.

Momentarily he caught O'Brien's eye. O'Brien had stood up. He had taken off his spectacles and was in the act of resettling them on his nose with his characteristic gesture. But there was a fraction of a second when their eyes met, and for as long as it took to happen Winston knew – yes, he *knew*! – that O'Brien was thinking the same thing as himself. An unmistakable message had passed. It was as though their two minds had opened and the thoughts were flowing from one into the other through their eyes. 'I am with you,' O'Brien seemed to be saying to him. 'I know precisely what you are feeling. I know all about your contempt, your hatred, your disgust. But don't worry, I am on your side!' And then the flash of intelligence was gone, and O'Brien's face was as inscrutable as everybody else's.

That was all, and he was already uncertain whether it had happened. Such incidents never had any sequel. All that they did was to keep alive in him the belief, or hope, that others besides himself were the enemies of the Party. Perhaps the rumours of vast underground conspiracies were true after all – perhaps the Brotherhood really existed! It was impossible, in spite of the endless arrests and confessions and executions, to be sure that the Brotherhood was not simply a myth. Some days he believed in it, some days not. There was no evidence, only fleeting glimpses that might mean anything or nothing: snatches of overhead conversation, faint scribbles on lavatory walls – once, even, when two strangers met, a small movement of the hand which had looked as though it might be a signal of recognition. It was all guesswork: very likely he had imagined everything. He had gone back to his cubicle without looking at O'Brien again. The idea of following up their momentary contact hardly crossed his mind. It would have been inconceivably dangerous even if he had known how to set about doing it. For a second, two seconds, they had exchanged an equivocal glance, and that was the end of the story. But even that was a memorable event, in the locked loneliness in which one had to live.

Winston roused himself and sat up straighter. He let out a belch. The gin was rising from his stomach.

His eyes re-focused on the page. He discovered that while he sat helplessly musing he had also been writing, as though by automatic action. And it was no longer the same cramped, awkward handwriting as before. His pen had slid voluptuously over the smooth paper, printing in large neat capitals –

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER
DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER
DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER
DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER
DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

over and over again, filling half a page.

He could not help feeling a twinge of panic. It was absurd, since the writing of those particular words was not more dangerous than the initial act of opening the diary; but for a moment he was tempted to tear out the spoiled pages and abandon the enterprise altogether.

He did not do so, however, because he knew that it was useless.

Whether he wrote DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER, or whether he refrained from writing it, made no difference. Whether he went on with the diary, or whether he did not go on with it, made no difference. The Thought Police would get him just the same. He had committed – would still have committed, even if he had never set pen to paper – the essential crime that contained all others in itself. Thoughtcrime, they called it. Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed for ever. You might dodge successfully for a while, even for years, but sooner or later they were bound to get you.

It was always at night – the arrests invariably happened at night. The sudden jerk out of sleep, the rough hand shaking your shoulder, the lights glaring in your eyes, the ring of hard faces round the bed. In the vast majority of cases there was no trial, no report of the arrest. People simply disappeared, always during the night. Your name was removed from the registers, every record of everything you had ever done was wiped out, your one-time existence was denied and then forgotten. You were abolished, annihilated: *vaporized* was the usual word.

For a moment he was seized by a kind of hysteria. He began writing in a hurried untidy scrawl:

theyll shoot me i dont care theyll shoot me in the back of the neck i dont care down with big brother they always shoot you in the back of the neck i dont care down with big brother – –

He sat back in his chair, slightly ashamed of himself, and laid down the pen. The next moment he started violently. There was a knocking at the door.

Already! He sat as still as a mouse, in the futile hope that whoever it was might go away after a single attempt. But no, the knocking was repeated. The worst thing of all would be to delay. His heart was thumping like a drum, but his face, from long habit, was probably expressionless. He got up and moved heavily towards the door.

2

As he put his hand to the door-knob Winston saw that he had left the diary open on the table. DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER was written all over it, in letters almost big enough to be legible across the

"The Pedestrian" (1951)
by Ray Bradbury

To enter out into that silence that was the city at eight o'clock of a misty evening in November, to put your feet upon that buckling concrete walk, to step over grassy seams and make your way, hands in pockets, through the silences, that was what Mr. Leonard Mead most dearly loved to do. He would stand upon the corner of an intersection and peer down long moonlit avenues of sidewalk in four directions, deciding which way to go, but it really made no difference; he was alone in this world of A.D. 2053, or as good as alone, and with a final decision made, a path selected, he would stride off, sending patterns of frosty air before him like the smoke of a cigar.

Sometimes he would walk for hours and miles and return only at midnight to his house. And on his way he would see the cottages and homes with their dark windows, and it was not unequal to walking through a graveyard where only the faintest glimmers of firefly light appeared in flickers behind the windows. Sudden gray phantoms seemed to manifest upon inner room walls where a curtain was still undrawn against the night, or there were whisperings and murmurs where a window in a tomb-like building was still open.

Mr. Leonard Mead would pause, cock his head, listen, look, and march on, his feet making no noise on the lumpy walk. For long ago he had wisely changed to sneakers when strolling at night, because the dogs in intermittent squads would parallel his journey with barkings if he wore hard heels, and lights might click on and faces appear and an entire street be startled by the passing of a lone figure, himself, in the early November evening.

On this particular evening he began his journey in a westerly direction, toward the hidden sea. There was a good crystal frost in the air; it cut the nose and made the lungs blaze like a Christmas tree inside; you could feel the cold light going on and off, all the branches filled with invisible snow. He listened to the faint push of his soft shoes through autumn leaves with satisfaction, and whistled a cold quiet whistle between his teeth, occasionally picking up a leaf as he passed, examining its skeletal pattern in the infrequent lamplights as he went on, smelling its rusty smell.

"Hello, in there," he whispered to every house on every side as he moved. "What's up tonight on Channel 4, Channel 7, Channel 9? Where are the cowboys rushing, and do I see the United States Cavalry over the next hill to the rescue?"

The street was silent and long and empty, with only his shadow moving like the shadow of a hawk in midcountry. If he closed his eyes and stood very still, frozen, he could imagine himself upon the center of a plain, a wintry, windless Arizona desert with no house in a thousand miles, and only dry river beds, the streets, for company.

"What is it now?" he asked the houses, noticing his wrist watch. "Eight-thirty P.M.? Time for a dozen assorted murders? A quiz? A revue? A comedian falling off the stage?"

Was that a murmur of laughter from within a moon-white house? He hesitated, but went on when nothing more happened. He stumbled over a particularly uneven section of sidewalk. The cement was vanishing under flowers and grass. In ten years of walking by night or day, for thousands of miles, he had never met another person walking, not once in all that time.

He came to a cloverleaf intersection which stood silent where two main highways crossed the town. During the day it was a thunderous surge of cars, the gas stations open, a great insect rustling and a ceaseless jockeying for position as the scarab-beetles, a faint incense puttering from their exhausts, skimmed homeward to the far directions. But now these highways, too, were like streams in a dry season, all stone and bed and moon radiance.

He turned back on a side street, circling around toward his home. He was within a block of his destination when the lone car turned a corner quite suddenly and flashed a fierce white cone of light upon him. He stood entranced, not unlike a night moth, stunned by the illumination, and then drawn toward it.

A metallic voice called to him:

"Stand still. Stay where you are! Don't move!"

He halted.

"Put up your hands!"

"But-" he said.

"Your hands up! Or we'll Shoot!"

The police, of course, but what a rare, incredible thing; in a city of three million, there was only one police car left, wasn't that correct? Ever since a year ago, 2052, the election year, the force had been cut down from three cars to one. Crime was ebbing; there was no need now for the police, save for this one lone car wandering and wandering the empty streets.

"Your name?" said the police car in a metallic whisper. He couldn't see the men in it for the bright light in his eyes.

"Leonard Mead," he said.

"Speak up!"

"Leonard Mead!"

"Business or profession?"

"I guess you'd call me a writer."

"No profession," said the police car, as if

"The Pedestrian" (1951)
by Ray Bradbury

talking to itself. The light held him fixed, like a museum specimen, needle thrust through chest.

"You might say that, " said Mr. Mead. He hadn't written in years. Magazines and books didn't sell any more. Everything went on in the tomblike houses at night now, he thought, continuing his fancy. The tombs, ill-lit by television light, where the people sat like the dead, the gray or multicolored lights touching their faces, but never really touching them.

"No profession," said the phonograph voice, hissing. "What are you doing out?"

"Walking," said Leonard Mead.

"Walking!"

"Just walking," he said simply, but his face felt cold.

"Walking, just walking, walking?"

"Yes, sir."

"Walking where? For what?"

"Walking for air. Walking to see."

"Your address!"

"Eleven South Saint James Street."

"And there is air in your house, you have an air conditioner, Mr. Mead?"

"Yes."

"And you have a viewing screen in your house to see with?"

"No."

"No?" There was a crackling quiet that in itself was an accusation.

"Are you married, Mr. Mead?"

"No."

"Not married," said the police voice behind the fiery beam, The moon was high and clear among the stars and the houses were gray and silent.

"Nobody wanted me," said Leonard Mead with a smile.

"Don't speak unless you're spoken to!"

Leonard Mead waited in the cold night.

"Just walking, Mr. Mead?"

"Yes."

"But you haven't explained for what purpose."

"I explained; for air, and to see, and just to walk."

"Have you done this often?"

"Every night for years."

The police car sat in the center of the street with its radio throat faintly humming.

"Well, Mr. Mead," it said.

"Is that all?" he asked politely.

"Yes," said the voice. "Here." There was a sigh, a pop. The back door of the police car sprang wide. "Get in."

"Wait a minute, I haven't done anything!"

"Get in."

"I protest!"

"Mr. Mead."

He walked like a man suddenly drunk. As he passed the front window of the car he looked in. As he had expected, there was no one in the front seat, no one in the car at all.

"Get in."

He put his hand to the door and peered into the back seat, which was a little cell, a little black jail with bars. It smelled of riveted steel. It smelled of harsh antiseptic; it smelled too clean and hard and metallic. There was nothing soft there.

"Now if you had a wife to give you an alibi," said the iron voice. "But-"

"Where are you taking me?"

The car hesitated, or rather gave a faint whirring click, as if information, somewhere, was dropping card by punch-slotted card under electric eyes. "To the Psychiatric Center for Research on Regressive Tendencies."

He got in. The door shut with a soft thud. The police car rolled through the night avenues, flashing its dim lights ahead.

They passed one house on one street a moment later, one house in an entire city of houses that were dark, but this one particular house had all of its electric lights brightly lit, every window a loud yellow illumination, square and warm in the cool darkness.

"That's my house," said Leonard Mead.

No one answered him.

The car moved down the empty river-bed streets and off away, leaving the empty streets with the empty side-walks, and no sound and no motion all the rest of the chill November night.

Bradbury, Ray (1920-), is an American author best known for his fantasy stories and science fiction. Bradbury's best writing effectively combines a lively imagination with a poetic style.

Collections of Bradbury's stories include The Martian Chronicles (1950), The Illustrated Man (1951), The October Country (1955), I Sing the Body Electric! (1969), Quicker Than the Eye (1996), and One More for the Road (2002). His novel Fahrenheit 451 (1953) describes a society that bans the ownership of books. His other novels include Dandelion Wine (1957), a poetic story of a boy's summer in an Illinois town in 1928; and Something Wicked This Way Comes (1962), a suspenseful fantasy about a black magic carnival that comes to a small Midwestern town. He has also written poetry, screenplays, and stage plays.

Ray Bradbury: Short Stories Summary and Analysis of "The Pedestrian"

Summary

"The Pedestrian" offers a glance into the future, where a man, Leonard Mead, goes for long walks every evening by himself. The year is 2053, and Mr. Mead is the only pedestrian near his home. He has never seen another person out walking during the many hours that he has strolled. He lives by himself - he has no wife, and so it is a tradition for him to walk every evening. It is never said explicitly in the story, but it can be understood that he is the only, or one of the only, walker in society.

On this particular evening, a police car stops him and orders him to put his hands up. He answers a series of questions about his life and family, and his answers are unsatisfactory to the police. This car is the only remaining police car in the area. After the election last year, the force was reduced from three cars to one because crime was ebbing and they were seen as unnecessary. When Mr. Mead answers the question of employment by saying he is a writer, the police interpret his answer as "unemployed." They order him to enter the car despite his protests, and as he approaches he realizes there is no driver at all - the car is automated.

Mr. Mead is filled with fear as he sits down in the cell-like backseat. The car informs him that he is being taken to a psychiatric center because of his regressive tendencies. His behavior is not acceptable in society - no one walks anymore and it is queer that he continues to do so as his primary hobby. En route, they pass his house, which is the only house that is lit up and inviting to the outside eye. Mr. Mead's behavior is completely atypical of the society in which he lives.

Analysis

Once again, Bradbury shows his skepticism of technology and "progress" in "The Pedestrian." In this story, a popular pastime is viewed as regressive, outdated, and abnormal. Mr. Mead's behavior is deemed threatening even though it is not hurting anyone - the powers in charge believe that his determination to walk every night could upset their social stability. He does not have a viewing screen in his house, which is expected of the members of this society. His behavior proposes an alternative activity that the government does not approve of, and this threatens their monopoly on control.

The act of ostracizing someone who is different than the rest of the group appears again, which is a common theme in Bradbury's stories. The police car, a representative of the powers in control, disapprove of his behavior, but the entire society disapproves as well. Ostracizing him is another form of censorship. His lit up house is symbolic of his difference from the rest of society. He is very easily identified as someone who is different.

The story calls into question the idea of progress for the sake of progress. An automated police car is programmed to stop Mr. Mead, even though he has not committed an offense. There is no room for human discretion and judgment in a world that is fully automated. Additionally, the viewing screen is considered a way to distract the public and keep them under the watchful eye of the government. A roaming public that is out walking is much harder to control than one that is stationed in front of its television set. Thus Bradbury's story raises the question of, "What does progress really mean? Is advancement, regardless of the consequences, a positive step in the right direction?"

Additionally, this story highlights the dangers and "slippery slope" of a government determining what is best for a group of people without their input. What exactly does "regressive tendencies" mean, and who has decided that walking means being regressive? Does our society resemble that of the pedestrian's, and if it does, is that a good or bad thing? Once again, Bradbury's stories prompt us to reflect on our surroundings and continue to be relevant despite a different temporal age.

Next Section"The Murderer" Summary and Analysis **Previous Section**"The Exiles" Summary and AnalysisBuy Study Guide

Ch 1: Brave New World

Aldous Huxley.

Chapter I

A squat grey building of only thirty-four storeys. Over the main entrance the words, CENTRAL LONDON HATCHERY AND CONDITIONING CENTRE, and, in a shield, the World State's motto, COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY.

The enormous room on the ground floor faced towards the north. Cold for all the summer beyond the panes, for all the tropical heat of the room itself, a harsh thin light glared through the windows, hungrily seeking some draped lay figure, some pallid shape of academic goose-flesh, but finding only the glass and nickel and bleakly shining porcelain of a laboratory. Wintriness responded to wintriness. The overalls of the workers were white, their hands gloved with a pale corpse-coloured rubber. The light was frozen, dead, a ghost. Only from the yellow barrels of the microscopes did it borrow a certain rich and living substance, lying along the polished tubes like butter, streak after luscious streak in long recession down the work tables.

'And this,' said the Director opening the door, 'is the Fertilizing Room.'

Bent over their instruments, three hundred Fertilizers were plunged, as the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning entered the room, in the scarcely breathing silence, the absentminded, soliloquizing hum or whistle, of absorbed concentration. A troop of newly arrived students, very young, pink and callow, followed nervously, rather abjectly, at the Director's heels. Each of them carried a note-book, in which, whenever the great man

spoke, he desperately scribbled. Straight from the horse's mouth. It was a rare privilege. The DHC for Central London always made a point of personally conducting his new students round the various departments.

'Just to give you a general idea,' he would explain to them. For of course some sort of general idea they must have, if they were to do their work intelligently – though as little of one, if they were to be good and happy members of society, as possible. For particulars, as everyone knows, make for virtue and happiness; generalities are intellectually necessary evils. Not philosophers, but fret-sawyers and stamp collectors compose the backbone of society.

'Tomorrow,' he would add, smiling at them with a slightly menacing geniality, 'you'll be settling down to serious work. You won't have time for generalities. Meanwhile . . .'

Meanwhile, it was a privilege. Straight from the horse's mouth into the note-book. The boys scribbled like mad.

Tall and rather thin but upright, the Director advanced into the room. He had a long chin and big, rather prominent teeth, just covered, when he was not talking, by his full, floridly curved lips. Old, young? Thirty? fifty? fifty-five? It was hard to say. And anyhow the question didn't arise in this year of stability, A.F. 632, it didn't occur to you to ask it.

'I shall begin at the beginning,' said the DHC, and the more zealous students recorded his intention in their notebooks: *Begin at the beginning*. 'These,' he waved his hand, 'are the incubators.' And opening an insulated door he showed them racks upon racks of numbered test-tubes. 'The week's supply of ova. Kept,' he explained, 'at blood heat: whereas the male gametes, and here he opened another door, 'they have to be kept at thirty-five instead of

thirty-seven. Full blood heat sterilizes.' Rams wrapped in thermogene beget no lambs.

Still leaning against the incubators he gave them, while the pencils scurried illegibly across the pages, a brief description of the modern fertilizing process; spoke first, of course, of its surgical introduction – 'the operation undergone voluntarily for the good of Society, not to mention the fact that it carries a bonus amounting to six months' salary'; continued with some account of the technique for preserving the excised ovary alive and actively developing; passed on to a consideration of optimum temperature, salinity, viscosity; referred to the liquor in which the detached and ripened eggs were kept; and, leading his charges to the work tables, actually showed them how the liquor was drawn off from the test-tubes; how it was let out drop by drop on to the specially warmed slides of the microscopes; how the eggs which it contained were inspected for abnormalities, counted and transferred to a porous receptacle; how (and he now took them to watch the operation) this receptacle was immersed in a warm bouillon containing free-swimming spermatozoa – at a minimum concentration of one hundred thousand per cubic centimetre, he insisted; and how, after ten minutes, the container was lifted out of the liquor and its contents re-examined; how, if any of the eggs remained unfertilized, it was again immersed, and, if necessary, yet again; how the fertilized ova went back to the incubators; where the Alphas and Betas remained until definitely bottled; while the Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons were brought out again, after only thirty-six hours, to undergo Bokanovsky's Process.

'Bokanovsky's Process,' repeated the Director, and the students underlined the words in their little note-books.

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 DHC concluded, 'bokanovskification consists of a series of arrests of development. We check the normal growth and, paradoxically enough, the egg responds by budding.'

Responds by budding. The pencils were busy.

He pointed. On a very slowly moving band a rack-full of test-tubes was entering a large metal box, another rack-full was emerging. Machinery faintly purred. It took eight minutes for the tubes to go through, he told them. Eight minutes of hard X-rays being about as much as an egg can stand. A few died; of the rest, the least susceptible divided into two; most put out four buds; some eight; all were returned to the incubators, where the buds began to develop; then, after two days, were suddenly chilled, chilled and checked. Two, four, eight, the buds in their turn budded; and having budded were dosed almost to death with alcohol; consequently burgeoned again and having budded – bud out of bud out of bud were thereafter – further arrest being generally fatal – left to develop in peace. By which time the original egg was in a fair way to becoming anything from eight to ninety-six embryos – a prodigious improvement, you will agree, on nature. Identical twins – but not in piddling twos and threes as in the old viviparous days, when an egg would sometimes accidentally divide; actually by dozens, by scores at a time.

'Scores,' the Director repeated and flung out his arms, as though he were distributing largesse. 'Scores.'

But one of the students was fool enough to ask where the advantage lay.

'My good boy!' The Director wheeled sharply round on him. 'Can't you see? Can't you *see?*' He raised a hand; his expression was solemn. 'Bokanovsky's Process is one of the major instruments of social stability!'

Major instruments of social stability.

Standard men and women; in uniform batches. The whole of a small factory staffed with the products of a single bokanovskified egg.

'Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines!' The voice was almost tremulous with enthusiasm. 'You really know where you are. For the first time in history.' He quoted the planetary motto. 'Community, Identity, Stability.' Grand words. 'If we could bokanovskify indefinitely the whole problem would be solved.'

Solved by standard Gammas, unvarying Deltas, uniform Epsilons. Millions of identical twins. The principle of mass production at last applied to biology.

'But, alas,' the Director shook his head, 'we *can't* bokanovskify indefinitely.'

Ninety-six seemed to be the limit; seventy-two a good average. From the same ovary and with gametes of the same male to manufacture as many batches of identical twins as possible – that was the best (sadly a second best) that they could do. And even that was difficult.

'For in nature it takes thirty years for two hundred eggs to reach maturity. But our business is to stabilize the population at this moment, here and now. Dribbling out twins over a quarter of a century – what would be the use of that?'

Obviously, no use at all. But Podsnap's Technique had immensely accelerated the process of ripening. They could make sure of at least a hundred and fifty mature eggs within two years. Fertilize and bokanovskify – in other words, multiply by seventy-two – and you get an average

of nearly eleven thousand brothers and sisters in a hundred and fifty batches of identical twins, all within two years of the same age.

'And in exceptional cases we can make one ovary yield us over fifteen thousand adult individuals.'

Beckoning to a fair-haired, ruddy young man who happened to be passing at the moment, 'Mr Foster,' he called. The ruddy young man approached. 'Can you tell us the record for a single ovary, Mr Foster?'

'Sixteen thousand and twelve in this Centre,' Mr Foster replied without hesitation. He spoke very quickly, had a vivacious blue eye, and took an evident pleasure in quoting figures. 'Sixteen thousand and twelve; in one hundred and eighty-nine batches of identicals. But of course they've done much better,' he rattled on, 'in some of the tropical Centres. Singapore has often produced over sixteen thousand five hundred; and Mombasa has actually touched the seventeen thousand mark. But then they have unfair advantages. You should see the way a negro ovary responds to pituitary! It's quite astonishing, when you're used to working with European material. Still,' he added, with a laugh (but the light of combat was in his eyes and the lift of his chin was challenging), 'still, we mean to beat them if we can. I'm working on a wonderful Delta-Minus ovary at this moment. Only just eighteen months old. Over twelve thousand seven hundred children already, either decanted or in embryo. And still going strong. We'll beat them yet.'

'That's the spirit I like!' cried the Director, and clapped Mr Foster on the shoulder. 'Come along with us and give these boys the benefit of your expert knowledge.'

Mr Foster smiled modestly. 'With pleasure.' They went.

In the Bottling Room all was harmonious bustle and ordered activity. Flaps of fresh sow's peritoneum ready cut

to the proper size came shooting up in little lifts from the Organ Store in the sub-basement. Whizz and then, click! the lift-hatches flew open; the Bottle-Liner had only to reach out a hand, take the flap, insert, smooth-down, and before the lined bottle had had time to travel out of reach along the endless band, whizz, click! another flap of peritoneum had shot up from the depths, ready to be slipped into yet another bottle, the next of that slow interminable procession on the band.

Next to the Liners stood the Matriculators. The procession advanced; one by one the eggs were transferred from their test-tubes to the larger containers; deftly the peritoneal lining was slit, the morula dropped into place, the saline solution poured in . . . and already the bottle had passed, and it was the turn of the labellers. Heredity, date of fertilization, membership of Bokanovsky Group – details were transferred from test-tube to bottle. No longer anonymous, but named, identified, the procession marched slowly on; on through an opening in the wall, slowly on into the Social Predestination Room.

'Eighty-eight cubic metres of card-index,' said Mr Foster with relish, as they entered.

'Containing *all* the relevant information,' added the Director.

'Brought up to date every morning.'

'And co-ordinated every afternoon.'

'On the basis of which they make their calculations.'

'So many individuals, of such and such quality,' said Mr Foster.

'Distributed in such and such quantities.'

'The optimum Decanting Rate at any given moment.'

'Unforeseen wastages promptly made good.'

'Promptly,' repeated Mr Foster. 'If you knew the amount of overtime I had to put in after the last Japanese

earthquake!' He laughed good-humouredly and shook his head.

'The Predestinators send in their figures to the Fertilizers.'

'Who give them the embryos they ask for.'

'And the bottles come in here to be predestinated in detail.'

'After which they are sent down to the Embryo Store.'

'Where we now proceed ourselves.'

And opening a door Mr Foster led the way down a staircase into the basement.

The temperature was still tropical. They descended into a thickening twilight. Two doors and a passage with a double turn ensured the cellar against any possible infiltration of the day.

'Embryos are like photograph film,' said Mr Foster waggishly, as he pushed open the second door. 'They can only stand red light.'

And in effect the sultry darkness into which the students now followed him was visible and crimson, like the darkness of closed eyes on a summer's afternoon. The bulging flanks of row on receding row and tier above tier of bottles glinted with innumerable rubies, and among the rubies moved the dim red spectres of men and women with purple eyes and all the symptoms of lupus. The hum and rattle of machinery faintly stirred the air.

'Give them a few figures, Mr Foster,' said the Director, who was tired of talking.

Mr Foster was only too happy to give them a few figures.

Two hundred and twenty metres long, two hundred wide, ten high. He pointed upwards. Like chickens drinking, the students lifted their eyes towards the distant ceiling.

Three tiers of racks; ground-floor level, first gallery, second gallery.

The spidery steelwork of gallery above gallery faded away in all directions into the dark. Near them three red ghosts were busily unloading demijohns from a moving staircase.

The escalator from the Social Predestination Room.

Each bottle could be placed on one of fifteen racks, each rack, though you couldn't see it, was a conveyor travelling at the rate of thirty-three and a third centimetres an hour. Two hundred and sixty-seven days at eight metres a day. Two thousand one hundred and thirty-six metres in all. One circuit of the cellar at ground level, one on the first gallery, half on the second, and on the two hundred and sixty-seventh morning, daylight in the Decanting Room. Independent existence – so called.

'But in the interval,' Mr Foster concluded, 'we've managed to do a lot to them. Oh, a very great deal.' His laugh was knowing and triumphant.

'That's the spirit I like,' said the Director once more. 'Let's walk round. You tell them everything, Mr Foster.'

Mr Foster duly told them.

Told them of the growing embryo on its bed of peritoneum. Made them taste the rich blood-surrogate on which it fed. Explained why it had to be stimulated with placentin and thyroxin. Told them of the *corpus luteum* extract. Showed them the jets through which at every twelfth metre from zero to 2040 it was automatically injected. Spoke of those gradually increasing doses of pituitary administered during the final ninety-six metres of their course. Described the artificial maternal circulation installed on every bottle at metres 112; showed them the reservoir of blood-surrogate, the centrifugal pump that kept the liquid moving over the placenta and drove it through the syn-

thetic lung and waste-product filter. Referred to the embryo's troublesome tendency to anaemia, to the massive doses of hog's stomach extract and foetal foal's liver with which, in consequence, it had to be supplied.

Showed them the simple mechanism by means of which, during the last two metres out of every eight, all the embryos were simultaneously shaken into familiarity with movement. Hinted at the gravity of the so-called 'trauma of decanting', and enumerated the precautions taken to minimize, by a suitable training of the bottled embryo, that dangerous shock. Told them of the tests for sex carried out in the neighbourhood of metre 200. Explained the system of labelling – a T for the males, a circle for the females and for those who were destined to become freemartins a question mark, black on a white ground.

'For of course,' said Mr Foster, 'in the vast majority of cases, fertility is merely a nuisance. One fertile ovary in twelve hundred – that would really be quite sufficient for our purposes. But we want to have a good choice. And of course one must always leave an enormous margin of safety. So we allow as many as thirty per cent of the female embryos to develop normally. The others get a dose of male sex-hormone every twenty-four metres for the rest of the course. Result: they're decanted as freemartins – structurally quite normal (except,' he had to admit, 'that they *do* have just the slightest tendency to grow beards), but sterile. Guaranteed sterile. Which brings us at last,' continued Mr Foster, 'out of the realm of mere slavish imitation of nature into the much more interesting world of human invention.'

He rubbed his hands. For, of course, they didn't content themselves with merely hatching out embryos; any cow could do that.

'We also predestine and condition. We decant our

babies as socialized human beings, as Alphas or Epsilons, as future sewage workers or future . . .' He was going to say future World Controllers, but correcting himself, said 'future Directors of Hatcheries' instead.

The DHC acknowledged the compliment with a smile.

They were passing Metre 320 on Rack 11. A young Beta Minus mechanic was busy with screw-driver and spanner on the blood-surrogate pump of a passing bottle. The hum of the electric motor deepened by fractions of a tone as he turned the nuts. Down, down . . . A final twist, a glance at the revolution counter, and he was done. He moved two paces down the line and began the same process on the next pump.

'Reducing the number of revolutions per minute,' Mr Foster explained. 'The surrogate goes round slower; therefore passes through the lung at longer intervals; therefore gives the embryo less oxygen. Nothing like oxygen-shortage for keeping an embryo below par.' Again he rubbed his hands.

'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 evidentally 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 per cent 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 fully 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.'

Didn't need and didn't get it. But though the Epsilon mind was mature at ten, the Epsilon body was not fit to work till eighteen. Long years of superfluous and wasted immaturity. If the physical development could be speeded up till it was as quick, say, as a cow's, what an enormous saving to the Community!

'Enormous!' murmured the students. Mr Foster's enthusiasm was infectious.

He became rather technical; spoke of the abnormal endocrine co-ordination which made men grow so slowly; postulated a germinal mutation to account for it. Could the effects of this germinal mutation be undone? Could the individual Epsilon embryo be made to revert, by a suitable technique, to the normality of dogs and cows? That was the problem. And it was all but solved.

Pilkington, at Mombasa, had produced individuals who were sexually mature at four and full grown at six and a half. A scientific triumph. But socially useless. Six-year-old men and women were too stupid to do even Epsilon work. And the process was an all-or-nothing one; either you failed to modify at all, or else you modified the whole way. They were still trying to find the ideal compromise between adults of twenty and adults of six. So far without success. Mr Foster sighed and shook his head.

Their wanderings through the crimson twilight had brought them to the neighbourhood of Metre 170 on Rack 9. From this point onwards Rack 9 was enclosed and the bottles performed the remainder of their journey in a kind of tunnel, interrupted here and there by openings two or three metres wide.

'Heat conditioning,' said Mr Foster.

Hot tunnels alternated with cool tunnels. Coolness was wedded to discomfort in the form of hard X-rays. By the time they were decanted the embryos had a horror of cold. They were predestined to emigrate to the tropics, to be miners and acetate silk spinners and steel workers. Later on their minds would be made to endorse the judgement of their bodies. 'We condition them to thrive on heat,' concluded Mr Foster. 'Our colleagues upstairs will teach them to love it.'

'And that,' put in the Director sententiously, 'that is the secret of happiness and virtue – liking what you've *got* to do. All conditioning aims at that: making people like their unescapable social destiny.'

In a gap between two tunnels, a nurse was delicately probing with a long fine syringe into the gelatinous contents of a passing bottle. The students and their guides stood watching her for a few moments in silence.

'Well, Lenina,' said Mr Foster, when at last she withdrew the syringe and straightened herself up.

The girl turned with a start. One could see that, for all the lupus and the purple eyes, she was uncommonly pretty.

'Henry!' Her smile flashed redly at him – a row of coral teeth.

'Charming, charming,' murmured the Director, and, giving her two or three little pats, received in exchange a rather deferential smile for himself.

'What are you giving them?' asked Mr Foster, making his tone very professional.

'Oh, the usual typhoid and sleeping sickness.'

'Tropical workers start being inoculated at metre 150,' Mr Foster explained to the students. 'The embryos still have gills. We immunize the fish against the future man's diseases.' Then, turning back to Lenina, 'Ten to five on the roof this afternoon,' he said, 'as usual.'

'Charming,' said the Director once more, and, with a final pat, moved away after the others.

On Rack 10 rows of next generation's chemical workers were being trained in the toleration of lead, caustic soda, tar, chlorine. The first of a batch of two hundred and fifty embryonic rocket-plane engineers was just passing the eleven hundredth metre mark on Rack 3. A special mechanism kept their containers in constant rotation. 'To improve their sense of balance,' Mr Foster explained. 'Doing repairs on the outside of a rocket in mid air is a ticklish job. We slacken off the circulation when they're right way up, so that they're half starved, and double the flow of surrogate when they're upside down. They learn to associate topsy-turvydom with wellbeing; in fact, they're only truly happy when they're standing on their heads.

'And now,' Mr Foster went on, 'I'd like to show you some very interesting conditioning for Alpha-Plus Intellectuals. We have a big batch of them on Rack 5. First Gallery level,' he called to two boys who had started to go down to the ground floor.

'They're round about metre 900,' he explained. 'You can't really do any useful intellectual conditioning till the foetuses have lost their tails. Follow me.'

But the Director had looked at his watch. 'Ten to three,' he said. 'No time for the intellectual embryos, I'm afraid.

We must go up to the Nurseries before the children have finished their afternoon sleep.'

Mr Foster was disappointed. 'At least one glance at the Decanting Room,' he pleaded.

'Very well, then.' The Director smiled indulgently. 'Just one glance.'

NAME & AUTHOR OF SHORT STORY	SYNOPSIS AND QUOTE	WHAT IDEAS IS THE AUTHOR MAKING ABOUT SOCIETY AND FUTURE REALITIES	WHILST THESE STORIES FIT THE SCIENCE FICTION GENRE, ARE THERE ARE ANY INDICATIONS FROM YOUR CONTEXT AND UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR WORLD THAT THEY REPRESENT WHAT IS ALREADY HAPPENING IN SOCIETY	IF YOU WERE TO WRITE SEQUELS TO THESE STORIES ENCOMPASSING CONTINUED SOCIAL EVOLUTION, HOW WOULD YOU DEVELOP THEM FURTHER? IN ORDER WORDS, WHAT WOULD BE THE NEXT PHASE IN THE CHANGING WORLD IN RELATION TO THE ISSUES RAISED IN THE NARRATIVE.
1984 by George Orwell				
Examination Day by Henry Slesar				
The ones who walk away from Omelas by Ursula Lee Guin				
The Pedestrian by Ray Bradbury				
Brave New World by Aldeus Huxley				