

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, railed 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 husband's 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 perspectives on the society that has been depicted in the text
- The reading of the text
- Values and attitudes of the text
- The assumptions that underpin the text

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: Johnathan 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.

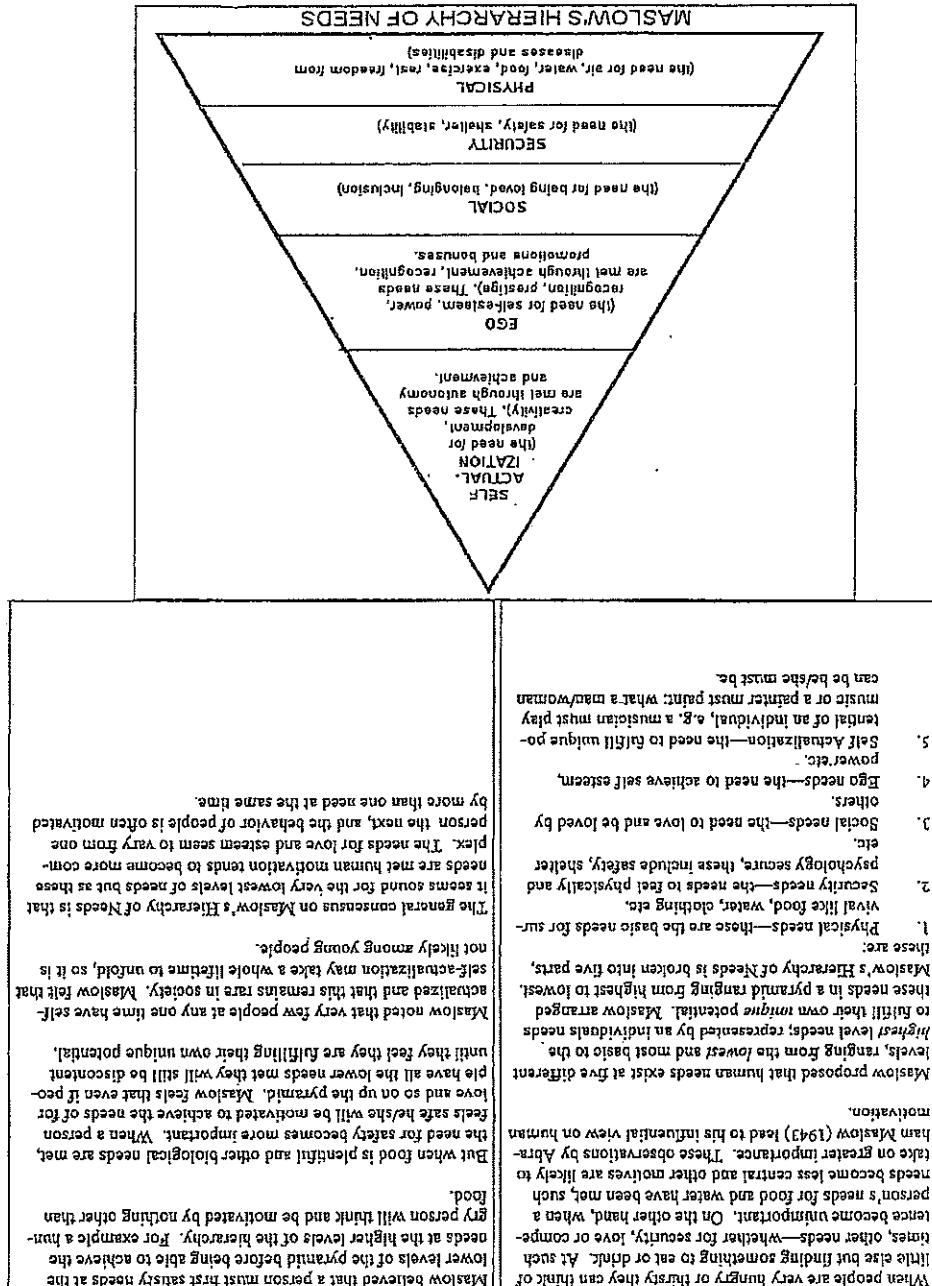
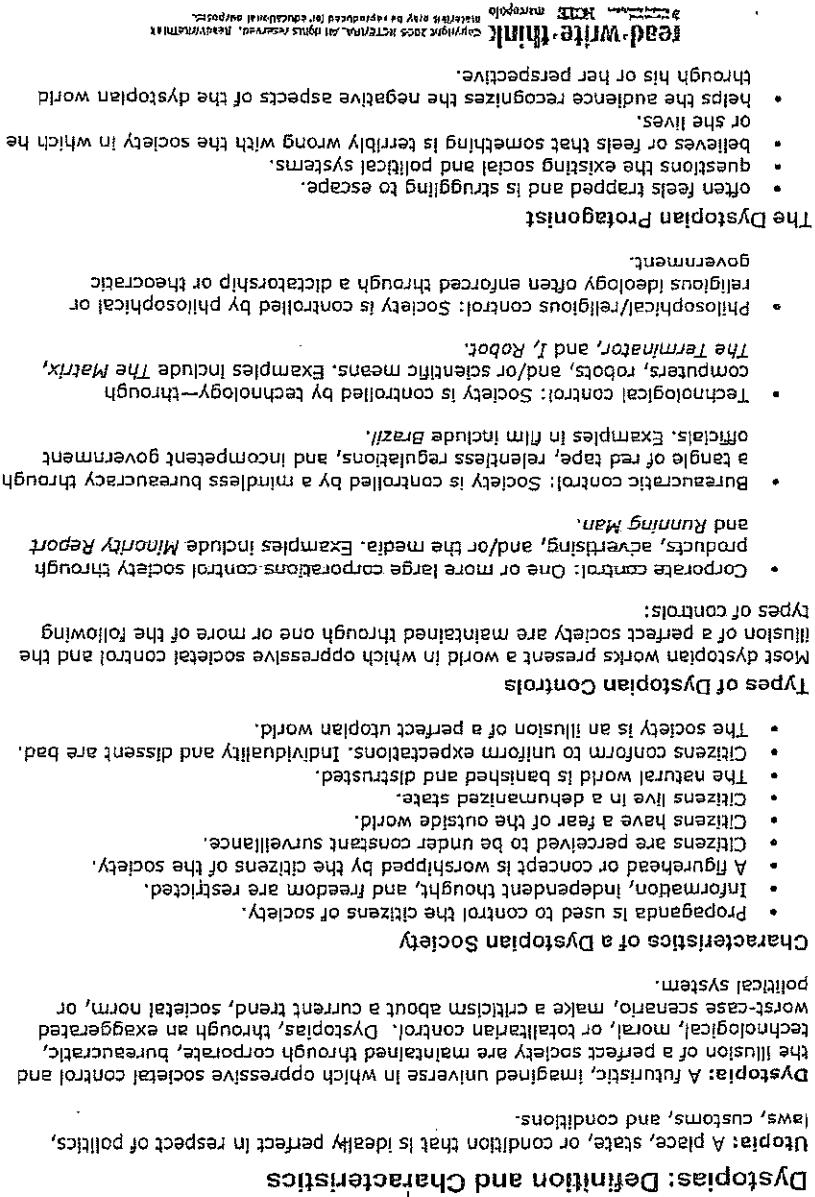
Types of Dystopian Controls

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 recognize the negative aspects of the dystopian world through his or her perspective.



Future

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 chiromancy, 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 scenarios 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

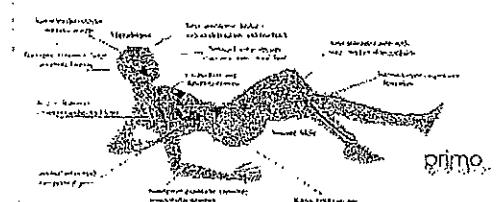
The cyborg, that posthuman hybrid of flesh and machine, has long been fodder for futuristic Hollywood flicks like *Terminator*. Cyborgs make most of us nervous about what sort of future we're facing. But acclaimed philosopher and cognitive scientist Andy Clark reckons all of us are already Natural Born 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>

(1)

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.

(2)

follows:

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 new technologies beyond the integrated circuit technology which has dominated since the 1970s. Several advances with a strong mechanical view of human intelligence have been made since the 1970s that this knowledge can benefit mankind."

that our goal. We want to try to understand how the biological system functions and malfunctions so we make very good copies of each other, we do not need to make computer copies of mammals. That is what computers that are billions of times bigger and faster than anything existing today. Mammals can upload their memories to another machine much faster than we can upload ours.

such as mind download, mind uploading (also occasionally referred to by other terms in transhumanism and solece fiction, mind transfer, whole brain emulation, whole body emulation, or electronic transcendence) refers to the hypothetical transfer of a human mind to an artificial robot. In either case it might claim ordinary human rights, certainly it is consciousness within was transferred into an artificial body, to which its consciousness is assumed to be recorded and/or uploaded consciousness. In the uploading scenario, the physical brain does not move from its original body to a new robotic shell; rather, the consciousness is downloaded from the original brain into a new robotic shell, such as matter of individuality and the soul.

the idea of uploading human consciousness into bodies created by robotics may provide options for copying?

which people may find interesting and disturbing, such as matters of individuality and the soul. uploadists would say that uploading was a priori (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apriori>) impossible. Many people also wonder if they were uploaded, would it be their essence uploaded, or simply a storage would be needed to stimulate the activity of the mind inside a computer.

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.

function (e^{-x} , proteins).

Ultimately, nano-computing is projected to hold the requisite capacity for computations per second estimated needs, in spite of the technological 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]

Detail sectioning

feasibly simplified. Recognition may also be useful for distributed simulation of a common, repeated should an entire brain's simulation, let alone emulation (at both cellular and molecular levels) be feasible by reducing the required computational power per physical size and energy needs, as

behavior of quantum systems, such ability would enable protein structure prediction which could be critical to correct emulation of intracellular neutral processes. Present methods require use of massive computation power (as the BPP does with IBM's Blue Gene Supercomputer) to use the quantum mechanical processes involved in ab initio protein structure prediction. If necessary, should the quantum computer become a reality, it is capacity for exactly such rapid calculations of quantum mechanical physics may well help the

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quantum waves would be needed (and thus why he thinks it would be difficult, besides undetective

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in the case where the mind is transferred into a computer, the subject would become a form of artificial intelligence, sometimes called an "upload". In a case where it is transferred into an artificial body, to which its consciousness is assumed to be recorded and/or uploaded consciousness. In the uploading scenario, the physical brain does not move from its original body to a new robotic shell, such as matter of individuality and the soul.

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

"The project will use a supercomputer based on IBM's Blue Gene design to map the entire brain of a rat, as it is very similar to that of a human but at a smaller scale, in order to expand to an entire focus on experimental studies caused by myelination of neurons, such as autism. Initial efforts are to various psychiatric disorders caused by myelination of neurons, such as autism. Such a computer electrical circuitry of the brain. The project seeks to research aspects of human cognition, and Project [1] The project will use a supercomputer based on IBM's Blue Gene design to map the entire brain of a rat, as it is very similar to that of a human but at a smaller scale, in order to expand to an entire focus on experimental studies caused by myelination of neurons, such as autism. Initial efforts are to various psychiatric disorders caused by myelination of neurons, such as autism. Such a computer electrical circuitry of the brain. The project seeks to research aspects of human cognition, and

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

Blue Brain Project and computational issues

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.

(5)

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.

In the popular computer game Total Annihilation, the 4,000-year war that eventually culminated with the destruction of the Arkyt Galaxy Way Galaxy was started over the issue of mind transfer, with one group (*the Arkyt*) 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 causing to lose their ability to reproduce.

In the popular science fiction show *StarGate SG-1*, the alien race who call themselves the Asgard rely solely on cloning and mind transference 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

The *Thirteenth Floor* is a film made in 1999 directed by *José Ferrán*. In the film, a scientist team discovers a technology to create a fully functioning virtual world which they could experience by plugging control of the bodies of simulated characters in the world, all of whom were killed. They were controlling it, then the mind of the simulated character he body finally belonged to would take over the body of the virtual person in the "real world".

Rodinette Pahls' *Gateway* series (also known as the *Hecche Saaga*) deals with a human being, in the computer program *Siegfried von Shmilk*, is uploaded into the "6th Gligatit space" (now atomic), as well as *Fred Pohl* wrote *Gateway* in 1976. The *Hecche Saaga* deals with the physical, social, but also spiritual life. It takes the narrative of *Gateway*, in which the describes people living in an uploaded state of mind upload into the "6th Gligatit space", between cyberspace and "meatspace", commonly depicted in *Newromancer*, and the interface name of hyperspace before William Gibson's award-winning *Neuromancer*, and the interface name of hyperspace between cyberspace and "meatspace", commonly depicted in *Cyberpunk Fiction*, in *Newromancer*, a hacking tool used by the main character is an arbotical body. The robots who persuade Anderson into doing this sell the process to him as a way to become immortal. Cobb Anderson, has his mind uploaded and his body replaced with an extremely human-like Anderson, made by computer simulation of a normal brain to a small, immortal backup computer at the base of the procedure.

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 on mind transfer to keep on living so that "death becomes a lasting experience", creates by man which developed to become nearly identical to human beings. When they die they decay on mind transfering to keep on living so that "death becomes a lasting experience".

In the series *Battletech* the antagonists of the story are the Clans, sentient computers created by man which developed to become nearly identical to human beings. When they die they decay on mind transfering to keep on living so that "death becomes a lasting experience".

In the 1982 novel *Software*, part of the *Ware Tetralogy* by Rudy Rucker, one of the main characters, Cobb Anderson, has his mind uploaded many of the philosophical, ethical, legal, and identity aspects of mind uploading, as well as the financial and computing aspects (i.e., hardware, software,

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

Personalized mind uploading into a new body or "sleeve", which may or may not have biomechanical benefits, or chemical "upgrades", since the sleeve could be grown or manufactured later travel could also be implanted into a new body or "sleeve", which may or may not have biomechanical, environmental factors for integration, etcetera. It was possible to copy the individual's mind to a storage system in the spinal vertebral, it was possible to copy the individual's part of standard life. With the use of cortical streaks, which record person's memories and

Followers of the Realian 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]

Mind Uploading advocates

In the movie *Cloud Atlas* the oracles and slate of consciousness (the real self). In other words, a mind 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.

Clouds that the original person recorded from his/her life. During playback, the thoughts and the actions that the external stimuli interpretation of the brain, the memories, another person can experience the life today's audio and video. Writing the "harm" in playback mode, the other person can experience the external time is limited to that of the recording session, frozen in time on a data disc much like today's audio and video. The mind itself is not uploaded into the device. The recorded event, which on mind transfering to keep on living so that "death becomes a lasting experience".

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Rodinette Pahls' *Gateway* series (also known as the *Hecche Saaga*) deals with a human being,

book *Urik* by Phillip K. Dick it takes the subject to its furthest point of all the early novels in the really they are playing elaborate and advanced fantasy games. In a twist at the end, the author as a means to control overpopulation. The uploaded people believe that they are "alive", but in

philosopher and logician Bertrand Russell, in which he describes people living in an uploaded state had organic brains grown into an immobile machine.

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 "Last and First Men" (1930) the *World*. A near miss was Neil R. Jones, 1931 short story "The Jameson Saleslily", wherein a person's organic brain was installed in a machine, and Olaf Stapledon's "Last and First Men" (1930)

proceedure. Some people would be unwilling to upload themselves for this reason. If their sentence is served even for a nanosecond, they asset, it is permanently wiped out. Some more gradual methods may avoid this problem by keeping the uploaded sentence functioning throughout the procedure.

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Orphan Black Was Never About Cloning - examination of science ethics went far beyond a single technology.

After five seasons of clone cabals, the BBC America/Space series *Orphan Black* has come to a mostly happy end. Yet an ellipsis follows wrapping of the show, hinting at bigger questions that transcend the characters' storylines. *Orphan Black's* conspiracies, camp, and Tatiana Maslany's riveting performances as a dozen different clones make it easy to overlook its prescience and profundity. From the opening scene in which Sarah Manning sees her clone kill herself by stepping in front of a train, questions of identity—both existential and scientific—provide the show's narrative thrust. Who created the clones? How? Why? How much control do their creators have over them? The show's final season provides answers while raising questions that transcend science fiction. What role should ethics play in science? Do scientific subjects have the right to self-determination?

If you stopped watching a few seasons back, here's a brief synopsis of how the mysteries wrap up. Neolution, an organization that seeks to control human evolution through genetic modification, began Project Leda, the cloning program, for two primary reasons: to see whether they could and to experiment with mutations that might allow people (i.e., themselves) to live longer. Neolution partnered with biotech companies such as Dyad, using its big pharma reach and deep pockets to harvest people's genetic information and to conduct individual and germline (that is, genetic alterations passed down through generations) experiments, including infertility treatments that result in horrifying birth defects and body modification, such as tail-growing.

In the final season, we meet the man behind the curtain: P.T. Westmoreland, who claims to be 170 years old thanks to life-extension treatments such as parabiosis (transfusions of young blood). Westmoreland wants to harness the healing powers of the particular LIN28A gene mutation found in the fertile clones' kids (Real-world studies suggest that while LIN28A mutations are linked to cancer, its RNA-binding protein promotes "self-renewal of embryotic stem cells.") Westmoreland—ultimately discovered to be a fraud who assumed the original Westmoreland's identity after he died—personifies one of the show's messages: that pseudoscience and megalomania can masquerade as science. Just because someone has a genetic sequencer and a lab coat doesn't mean he's legitimate, and just because someone's a scientist doesn't mean he's ethical.

Orphan Black demonstrates Carl Sagan's warning of a time when "awesome technological powers are in the hands of a very few." Neolutionists do whatever they want, pausing only to consider whether they're missing an opportunity to exploit. Their hubris is straight out of Victor Frankenstein's playbook. Frankenstein wonders whether he ought to first reanimate something "of simpler organisation" than a human, but starting small means waiting for glory. *Orphan Black's* evil scientists embody this belief: if they're going to play God, then they'll control not just their own destinies, but the clones' and, ultimately, all of humanity's. Any sacrifices along the way are for the greater good—reasoning that culminates in Westmoreland's eugenics fantasy to genetically sterilize 99 percent of the population he doesn't enhance.

Orphan Black uses sci-fi tropes to explore real-world plausibility. Neolution shares similarities with transhumanism, the belief that humans should use science and technology to take control of their own evolution. While some transhumanists dabble in body modifications, such as microchip implants or night-vision eye drops, others seek to end suffering by curing human illness and aging. But even these goals can be seen as selfish, as access to disease-eradicating or life-extending technologies would be limited to the wealthy. Westmoreland's goal to "sell Neolution to the 1 percent" seems frighteningly plausible—transhumanists, who statistically tend to be white, well-educated, and male, and their associated organizations raise and spend massive sums of money to help fulfill their goals. Critics raise many objections to transhumanism, including overpopulation and the socioeconomic divide between mortals and elite immortals, which some think might beget dystopia. Researchers are exploring ways to extend the human lifespan whether by genetic modification, reversing senescence (cellular deterioration with age), nanobots, or bio-printed tissues and organs, but in the world of *Orphan Black* we don't have to speculate about the consequences of such work.

The show depicts the scientists' dehumanization of the clones from its first scene, when Beth, unable to cope with the realities of her cloned existence, commits suicide. When another clone, Cosima, tries to research her DNA, she gets a patent statement: "This organism and derivative genetic material is restricted intellectual property." It doesn't matter that Cosima is sick or that she's in love. She's not a person. She's a trademarked product, as are the other clones.

The show's most tragic victim is Rachel, the "evil" clone. She's the cautionary tale: Frankenstein's monster, alone, angry, and cursed. The only one raised with the awareness of what she is, Rachel grows up assured of her own importance and motivated to expand it by doing Neolution's dirty work. Westmoreland signs a document giving Rachel sovereignty, but later she sees computer files in which she's still referred to by her patient number. Despite her leadership, cunning, and bravery, even those working with her never regard her as human. Her willingness to hurt her sisters and herself shows what happens to someone whose experience of nature and nurture is one and the same.

We, the viewers, also dehumanize Rachel by writing her off as "one of them." When she lands on the side of her sisters, she does so not out of morality but out of vengeance. At the end, Westmoreland, the closest thing she has to a father, taunts her: "It's fitting you return to your cage. All lab rats do." But her childhood flashbacks suggest she doesn't want others to experience what she has. When Neolutionists take 9-year-old Kira from her home at gunpoint, Rachel initially supports the plan to load Kira with fertility drugs and then harvest her eggs to access her mutated gene. But when Kira gives Rachel a friendship bracelet (and perhaps her first friendship), Rachel's haunted expression suggests that beneath her usually unflappable demeanor, she's still a frightened little girl. When Kira asks, "Who hurt you?" Rachel responds, "They all did."

Whether motivated by retaliation; morality, or both, Rachel helps save Kira and takes down Neolution. Yet it's unclear what's left for her as she'll never be welcomed into "Clone Club." Her last act is to provide a list of clones around the world so Cosima and former Dyad researcher Delphine can cure them. Rachel gives the clones control over their lives—and in so doing, asserts control over her own. Ultimately, Orphan Black is all about choice. There's much in life we can't choose: our parents, the circumstances of our birth, our DNA. It's no surprise that a show that espouses girl power ("the future is female" is both spoken and seen on a T-shirt in the final two episodes) dwells on the importance of choice.

The Future is Female

The finale flashes back to Sarah in front of Planned Parenthood debating whether to have an abortion. Reckless, rough Sarah surprises herself (and Mrs. S, her foster mother) by deciding to keep the baby. Years before she learns how many decisions others have made about her body, she makes a decision for herself. On Orphan Black, denial of choice is tantamount to imprisonment. That the clones have to earn autonomy underscores the need for ethics in science, especially when it comes to genetics. The show's message here is timely given the rise of gene-editing techniques such as CRISPR. Recently, the National Academy of Sciences gave germline gene editing the green light, just one year after academy scientists from around the world argued it would be "irresponsible to proceed" without further exploring the implications.

Scientists in the United Kingdom and China have already begun human genetic engineering and American scientists recently genetically engineered a human embryo for the first time. The possibility of Project Leda isn't farfetched. Orphan Black warns us that money, power, and fear of death can corrupt both people and science. Once that happens, loss of humanity—of both the scientists and the subjects—is inevitable.

In Carl Sagan's dark vision of the future, "people have lost the ability to set their own agendas or knowledgeably question those in authority." This describes the plight of the clones at the outset of Orphan Black, but as the series continues, they challenge this paradigm by approaching science and scientists with skepticism, ingenuity, and grit. The "lab rats" assert their humanity and refuse to run the maze. "Freedom looks different to everyone," Sarah says in the finale. As she struggles to figure out what freedom will look like for her—should she get her GED? Sell the house? Get a job?—it's easy to see how overwhelming such options would be for someone whose value has always been wrapped in a double helix. But no matter what uncertainties their futures hold, the clones dismantle their cages and make their own choices, proving what we've known all along—their humanity.

This article is part of *Future Tense*, a collaboration among Arizona State University, New America, and Slate. *Future Tense* explores the ways emerging technologies affect society, policy, and culture.



What is Transhumanism?

Transhumanism is a way of thinking about the future that is based on the premise that the human species in its current form does not represent the end of our development but rather a comparatively early phase.

Transhumanism is a loosely defined movement that has developed gradually over the past two decades.

Transhumanism is a class of philosophies of life that seek the continuation and acceleration of the evolution of intelligent life beyond its currently human form and human limitations by means of science and technology guided by life-promoting principles and values.

- Max More (1990)



"I have a foreboding of an America in my children's or grandchildren's time—when the United States is a service and information economy; when nearly all the manufacturing industries have slipped away to other countries; when awesome technological powers are in the hands of a very few, and no one representing the public interest can ever grasp the issues; when the people have lost the ability to set their own agenda, or knowledgeably question those in authority; when, clutching our crystals and nervously consulting our horoscopes, our critical faculties in decline, unable to distinguish between what feels good and what's true, we slide almost without noticing back into superstition and darkness."

—Carl Sagan (1934-1996) In his 1995 book *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*



McCarthyism is the term describing a period of intense anti-Communist suspicion in the United States that lasted roughly from the late 1940s to the mid to late 1950s.

The term gets its name from U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy, a Republican of Wisconsin.

The period of McCarthyism is also referred to as the Second Red Scare. It happened at the same times as increased fears of Communist influence on American institutions, espionage by Soviet agents such as the Rosenbergs, heightened tension from Soviet control over Eastern Europe, the success of the Chinese Communist revolution (1949) and the Korean War (1950-1953).

"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 barktugs 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 place 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 midcourt. 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 pattering from their exhausts, skinned 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 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,

lissing. "What are you doing out?"

"Walking," said Leonard Mead.

"Walking!"

"Just walking," he said stupidly, 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"

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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.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION - BIOGRAPHY

RAY BRADBURY

Ray Bradbury was born in Waukegan, Illinois, on August 22, 1920. The third son of Leonard Spaulding Bradbury and Esthere Marie Moberg Bradbury, Ray showed promise as a writer at the early age of eleven when he began writing short stories on butcher paper. As a child, he was fascinated by magic and fantasy and spent many an afternoon dreaming that he would grow up to be a magician himself. Bradbury's family moved between Waukegan and Tucson, Arizona, several times. In 1934, the family moved to Los Angeles, California, where Bradbury attended high school and involved himself in the drama club. He planned to become an actor, but a few of his teachers recognized his talent and encouraged him to begin writing. Bradbury graduated from Los Angeles High School in 1938 and did not attend further formal education. From 1938 to 1942, Bradbury sold newspapers on Los Angeles street corners. He furthered his education by spending his evenings in the library and at his typewriter.

Bradbury's first short story, "Hollerbochen's Dilemma," was printed in 1938 in an amateur fan magazine *Imagination*. He went on to publish his own magazine, called *Futuria Fantasia*, writing most of the content himself. Then in 1941, he published a short story called "Pendulum", which appeared in a 1941 issue of *Super Science Stories*, for which he received his first income. During the 1940's, he dedicated himself to writing short stories and developed his own distinct literary style. "The Lake," a 1942 published short story, was the first time Bradbury demonstrated his unique writing style. Most of his subject matter was fantastic, as seen in such stories as "Uncle Einar," a tale about a man with green wings. "The Big Black and White Game," published in 1945, earned Bradbury a name for himself as a short story writer. On September 27, 1947, Bradbury married Marguerite "Maggie" McClure. In 1947, he published a collection of his short stories entitled *Dark Carnival*.

"Hollerbochen's Dilemma," was his first short story publication. In 1938, it was printed in the amateur fan magazine *Imagination*. The next year, Bradbury printed four issues of his own fan magazine, *Futuria Fantasia*, writing most of the content himself. His first paid publication, the short story "Pendulum" appeared in a 1941 issue of *Super Science Stories*. In 1945, Bradbury's "The Big Black and White Game" was chosen for publication in *Best American Short Stories*. *Dark Carnival*, Bradbury's first short story collection, was published in late 1947. The publication of *The Martian Chronicles* in 1950, established Bradbury's reputation as a leading science fiction writer.

Fahrenheit 451, another of Bradbury's most important texts, appeared in 1953. Like *The Martian Chronicles*, it is a piece of social commentary and an interesting story. It is set in the future where the government has banned writing. A character resists the government ban, and eventually joins a group of rebels who memorize major works of literature.

In 1950, Bradbury turned his attention solely to science fiction, although most of his writing had an element of social commentary in it. *The Martian Chronicles* reflected the

prevailing anxieties of post-war America and the fascination that mankind had developed for discovering life on other planets. The book deals with the human attempt to colonize Mars and the effects of that colonization. It is as much a work of social criticism as it is a fascinating piece of science fiction. The book was very popular and gained Bradbury the reputation as a leading writer of science fiction in America.

Bradbury continued to write science fiction novels and is best known for *Fahrenheit 451*, *Dandelion Wine* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. Many of his books have been made into major motion pictures and several have won him awards, including the O’Henry Memorial Award, the Benjamin Franklin award, the Aviation Space Writers Association Award, and the Grand Master Award from the Science Fiction Writers of America. He was also awarded the World Fantasy Award for Lifetime Achievement. *Icarus Montgolfier Wright*, his animated film about the history of flight, was nominated for an academy award, and he won an Emmy for the teleplay of The Halloween Tree.

Aside from his literary achievements, Bradbury served as the consultant for United States pavilion at the New York World’s Fair in 1964. In the early nineties, he contributed to the conception of the Orbitron space ride at Euro Disney, France. Bradbury and his wife continue to live in Los Angeles where he still writes daily and occasionally lectures on science fiction.

Bradbury has used several pseudonyms throughout his career including Doug Rogers, Ron Reynolds, Guy Amory, Omega, Anthony Corvais, E. Cunningham, Brian Eldred, Cecil Claybourne Cunningham, D. Lerium Tremaine, Edward Banks, D. R. Banet, William Elliott, Brett Sterling, Leonard Spaulding, Leonard Douglas, and Douglas Spaulding.

Ray Bradbury’s Works

Dark Carnival (1947)

The Martian Chronicles (1950)

The Illustrated Man (1951)

No Man is an Island (1952)

Fahrenheit 451 (1953)

The Golden Apples of the Sun (1953)

The October Country (1955)

Switch On the Night (1955)

Dandelion Wine (1957)

Sun and Shadow (1957)

A Medicine For Melancholy (1960)

Something Wicked This Way Comes (1962)

The Essence of Creative Writing: Letters to a Young Aspiring Author (1962)

R Is For Rocket (1962)

The Anthem Sprinters And Other Antics (1963)

The Machineries of Joy (1964)

The Pedestrian (1964)

The Autumn People (1965)

A Device Out of Time (1965)

The Vintage Bradbury (1965)

The Day It Rained Forever: A Comedy in One Act (1966)

The Pedestrian: A Fantasy in One Act (1966)

S Is For Space (1966)

Tomorrow Midnight (1966)

LITERARY / HISTORICAL INFORMATION

This text was first published in 1962, and it is highly possible that some of the ideas were created from Bradbury's childhood experiences. Many of the actions the boys engage in have a very nineteen fifties feel to them, and it is clear that Main Street America does not look as it does in present society. The book was originally a series of short stories that evolved into a novel over the course of a few years. In 1983, Disney made the story into a film.

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

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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.

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Orphan Black Was Never About Cloning - examination of science ethics went far beyond a single technology.

After five seasons of clone cabals, the BBC America/Space series *Orphan Black* has come to a mostly happy end. Yet an ellipsis follows wrapping of the show, hinting at bigger questions that transcend the characters' storylines. *Orphan Black*'s conspiracies, camp, and Tatiana Maslany's riveting performances as a dozen different clones make it easy to overlook its prescience and profundity. From the opening scene in which Sarah Manning sees her clone kill herself by stepping in front of a train, questions of identity—both existential and scientific—provide the show's narrative thrust. Who created the clones? How? Why? How much control do their creators have over them? The show's final season provides answers while raising questions that transcend science fiction. What role should ethics play in science? Do scientific subjects have the right to self-determination?

If you stopped watching a few seasons back, here's a brief synopsis of how the mysteries wrap up. Neolution, an organization that seeks to control human evolution through genetic modification, began Project Leda, the cloning program, for two primary reasons: to see whether they could and to experiment with mutations that might allow people (i.e., themselves) to live longer. Neolution partnered with biotech companies such as Dyad, using its big pharma reach and deep pockets to harvest people's genetic information and to conduct individual and germline (that is, genetic alterations passed down through generations) experiments, including infertility treatments that result in horrifying birth defects and body modification, such as tail-growing.

In the final season, we meet the man behind the curtain: P.T. Westmoreland, who claims to be 170 years old thanks to life-extension treatments such as parabiosis (transfusions of young blood). Westmoreland wants to harness the healing powers of the particular LIN28A gene mutation found in the fertile clones' kids (Real-world studies suggest that while LIN28A mutations are linked to cancer, its RNA-binding protein promotes "self-renewal of embryonic stem cells.") Westmoreland—ultimately discovered to be a fraud who assumed the original Westmoreland's identity after he died—personifies one of the show's messages: that pseudoscience and megalomania can masquerade as science. Just because someone has a genetic sequencer and a lab coat doesn't mean he's legitimate, and just because someone's a scientist doesn't mean he's ethical.

Orphan Black demonstrates Carl Sagan's warning of a time when "awesome technological powers are in the hands of a very few." Neolutionists do whatever they want, pausing only to consider whether they're missing an opportunity to exploit. Their hubris is straight out of Victor Frankenstein's playbook. Frankenstein wonders whether he ought to first reanimate something "of simpler organisation" than a human, but starting small means waiting for glory. *Orphan Black*'s evil scientists embody this belief: if they're going to play God, then they'll control not just their own destinies, but the clones' and, ultimately, all of humanity's. Any sacrifices along the way are for the greater good—reasoning that culminates in Westmoreland's eugenics fantasy to genetically sterilize 99 percent of the population he doesn't enhance.

Orphan Black uses sci-fi tropes to explore real-world plausibility. Neolution shares similarities with transhumanism, the belief that humans should use science and technology to take control of their own evolution. While some transhumanists dabble in body modifications, such as microchip implants or night-vision eye drops, others seek to end suffering by curing human illness and aging. But even these goals can be seen as selfish, as access to disease-eradicating or life-extending technologies would be limited to the wealthy. Westmoreland's goal to "sell Neolution to the 1 percent" seems frighteningly plausible—transhumanists, who statistically tend to be white, well-educated, and male, and their associated organizations raise and spend massive sums of money to help fulfill their goals. Critics raise many objections to transhumanism, including overpopulation and the socioeconomic divide between mortals and elite immortals, which some think might beget dystopia. Researchers are exploring ways to extend the human lifespan whether by genetic modification, reversing senescence (cellular deterioration with age), nanobots, or bio-printed tissues and organs, but in the world of *Orphan Black* we don't have to speculate about the consequences of such work.

The show depicts the scientists' dehumanization of the clones from its first scene, when Beth, unable to cope with the realities of her cloned existence, commits suicide. When another clone, Cosima, tries to research her DNA, she gets a patent statement: "This organism and derivative genetic material is restricted intellectual property." It doesn't matter that Cosima is sick or that she's in love. She's not a person. She's a trademarked product, as are the other clones.

The show's most tragic victim is Rachel, the "evil" clone. She's the cautionary tale: Frankenstein's monster, alone, angry, and cursed. The only one raised with the awareness of what she is, Rachel grows up assured of her own importance and motivated to expand it by doing Neolution's dirty work. Westmoreland signs a document giving Rachel sovereignty, but later she sees computer files in which she's still referred to by her Patent number. Despite her leadership, cunning, and bravery, even those working with her never regard her as human. Her willingness to hurt her sisters and herself shows what happens to someone whose experience of nature and nurture is one and the same.

We, the viewers, also dehumanize Rachel by writing her off as "one of them." When she lands on the side of her sisters, she does so not out of morality but out of vengeance. At the end, Westmoreland, the closest thing she has to a father, taunts her: "It's fitting you return to your cage. All lab rats do." But her childhood flashbacks suggest she doesn't want others to experience what she has. When Neolutionists take 9-year-old Kira from her home at gunpoint, Rachel initially supports the plan to load Kira with fertility drugs and then harvest her eggs to access her mutated gene. But when Kira gives Rachel a friendship bracelet (and perhaps her first friendship), Rachel's haunted expression suggests that beneath her usually unflappable demeanor, she's still a frightened little girl. When Kira asks, "Who hurt you?" Rachel responds, "They all did."

Whether motivated by retaliation; morality, or both, Rachel helps save Kira and takes down Neolution. Yet it's unclear what's left for her as she'll never be welcomed into "Clone Club." Her last act is to provide a list of clones around the world so Cosima and former Dyad researcher Delphine can cure them. Rachel gives the clones control over their lives—and in so doing, asserts control over her own. Ultimately, Orphan Black is all about choice. There's much in life we can't choose: our parents, the circumstances of our birth, our DNA. It's no surprise that a show that espouses girl power ("the future is female") is both spoken and seen on a T-shirt in the final two episodes) dwells on the importance of choice.

The Future is Female

The finale flashes back to Sarah in front of Planned Parenthood debating whether to have an abortion. Reckless, rough Sarah surprises herself (and Mrs. S., her foster mother) by deciding to keep the baby. Years before she learns how many decisions others have made about her body, she makes a decision for herself. On Orphan Black, denial of choice is tantamount to imprisonment. That the clones have to earn autonomy underscores the need for ethics in science, especially when it comes to genetics. The show's message here is timely given the rise of gene-editing techniques such as CRISPR. Recently, the National Academy of Sciences gave germline gene editing the green light, just one year after academy scientists from around the world argued it would be "irresponsible to proceed" without further exploring the implications.

Scientists in the United Kingdom and China have already begun human genetic engineering and American scientists recently genetically engineered a human embryo for the first time. The possibility of Project Leda isn't farfetched. Orphan Black warns us that money, power, and fear of death can corrupt both people and science. Once that happens, loss of humanity—of both the scientists and the subjects—is inevitable.

In Carl Sagan's dark vision of the future, "people have lost the ability to set their own agendas or knowledgeably question those in authority." This describes the plight of the clones at the outset of Orphan Black, but as the series continues, they challenge this paradigm by approaching science and scientists with skepticism, ingenuity, and grit. The "lab rats" assert their humanity and refuse to run the maze. "Freedom looks different to everyone," Sarah says in the finale. As she struggles to figure out what freedom will look like for her—should she get her GED? Sell the house? Get a job?—it's easy to see how overwhelming such options would be for someone whose value has always been wrapped in a double helix. But no matter what uncertainties their futures hold, the clones dismantle their cages and make their own choices, proving what we've known all along—their humanity.

This article is part of *Future Tense*, a collaboration among Arizona State University, New America, and Slate. *Future Tense* explores the ways emerging technologies affect society, policy, and culture.

Theme	Values that Underpin Comments/Significance	Quotes from 'The Pedestrian'	Values that Underpin and positioning		
1					1
2					2
3					3
4					4
5					5
6					6

Short Story Study - 'The Pedestrian' by Ray Bradbury

Year 12 English ☺

**'The Pedestrian'
by Ray Bradbury**

Short Story Conventions:

- ◆ Structure and suspense; juxtaposition
- ◆ Point of View
- ◆ Symbolism
- ◆ Setting and Atmosphere
- ◆ Themes and Issues, (context - values and attitudes)
- ◆ Characterisation – protagonist, minor characters
- ◆ Language – tone, diction, imagery, emotive, descriptive

A. Structure

- 1 What questions are raised in the introductory paragraphs (page one)? How is the reader encouraged to engage with the text?
- 2 "He was alone in the world of AD 2052". Why is this information included so early in the story?
- 3 How does the author build suspense throughout the story? Refer to two techniques.
- 4 Explain briefly, with a quote, where you think the climax of the story occurs. Is the location of the climax at this particular point in the plot typical of the short story genre? *Refer to the basic structural features of short stories.

B. Point of View

- 1 Why do you think the author tells the story from a third person limited perspective, rather than first person from Mead's perspective?
- 2 At times, we 'hear' Mead's voice/thoughts. Find two examples and describe how these position the reader to respond to character and issues.

C. Symbolism

- 1 Discuss the symbolism of light and dark in the story. What other connotations do they hold?
- 2 What might the cold, frosty air represent?
- 3 Explain the possible symbolism of "The cement was vanishing under flowers and grass."
- 4 Find three symbols of the negative impact of technological advancement.

D. Setting and Atmosphere

- 1 Consider your reading of the first page of the text. What is unusual about the setting/city? What are some of its main features and what does it seem to lack?
- 2 Comment on the frequent reference to tombs/graveyards. What does this add to your understanding of the story?
- 3 Examine the juxtaposition between the setting by day and by night, for example the 'great insect' of the cloverleaf intersection turns to 'dry streams in a dry season'. Highlight three differences.
- 4 Discuss the importance of atmosphere in the opening and ending paragraphs. How does it position the reader to respond to key ideas?

E. Themes and issues

- 1 On page four, Leonard Mead is interrogated (questioned in depth) by a voice from a police car. Some of the questions from the police car are revealing; they explain what society in 2052 considers 'normal' behaviour for city dwellers. In what ways might Leonard Mead be considered 'abnormal' by this society?
- 2 Further to question 1, what does the reference to the Psychiatric Centre for Research on Regressive Tendencies institution suggest to you?
- 3 The author constructs an impression of urban (city) society in the future. Crime is almost unheard of, but what other problems appear to be affecting city life?
- 4 How has the author constructed a world of passive conformity? What other issues does this raise?
- 5 What messages does Bradbury convey regarding technological innovation?
- 6 To what extent are we more or less intolerant of eccentricity today?
- 7 How does the text challenge current Western/American values such as independence and individuality? To what other values does the text appeal?

F. Characterisation

- 1 Examine the introduction of our protagonist Leonard Mead into the setting/story on page one. Describe his interests, values, actions and observations.
- 2 On page five, the innocent and harmless Leonard Mead is arrested. What techniques does the author use to position us to feel anxious or concerned about him?
- 3 Why does Leonard Mead walk regularly? Offer three reasons.
- 4 Examine Mead's responses to the police car's questions (pages four and five). What do they reveal about Mead himself and humankind in general?

G. Language

- 1 How does the use of **visual imagery/figurative language** enhance the effectiveness of the text? Refer to a range of devices and functions.
- 2 How does the use of **aural imagery/figurative language** enhance the effectiveness of the text? Refer to a range of devices and functions.
- 3 Explain the unnatural imagery that 'characterises' the police car. What does the car represent?
- 4 Identify the **irony** in personifying the police car. What issue does this highlight?
- 5 How would you describe the **tone** (author's attitude to the subject) of the story?
- 6 Note terminology such as 'viewing screen'. What do such references add to your understanding of the context of the story?

H. Genre

- 1 What makes 'The Pedestrian' a fairly conventional science fiction narrative? Identify particular features of the genre and examples to prove your points. *Closely consider the cautionary function of such texts.
- 2 What links does the story hold with our context/time? Why is this necessary for the success of the narrative?
- 3 How realistic are the author's predictions?
- 4 Relate the story to your context. Did you find the text difficult to come to grips with considering the extent television has influenced our lives today? **What values have we derived from television?

- The perspectives on the society that has been depicted in the text
- The reading of the text
- Values and attitudes of the text
- The assumptions that underpin the text

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Margaret Atwood (1986). The Handmaid's
Tale. Vintage: London.

HISTORICAL NOTES

HISTORICAL NOTES ON *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*

Being a partial transcript of the proceedings of the Twelfth Symposium on Gileadean Studies, held as part of the International Historical Association Convention, which took place at the University of Denay, Nunavut, on June 25, 2195.

Chair: Professor Maryann Crescent Moon, Department of Caucasian Anthropology, University of Denay, Nunavut.

Keynote Speaker: Professor James Darcy Pieixoto, Director, Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Archives, Cambridge University, England.

CRESCENT MOON:

I am delighted to welcome you all here this morning, and I'm pleased to see that so many of you have turned out for Professor Pieixoto's, I am sure, fascinating and worthwhile talk. We of the Gileadean Research Association believe that this period well repays further study, responsible as it ultimately was for redrawing the map of the world, especially in this hemisphere.

But before we proceed, a few announcements. The fishing expedition will go forward tomorrow as planned, and for those of you who have not brought suitable rain gear and insect repellent, these are available for a nominal charge at the Registration Desk. The Nature Walk and Outdoor Period-Costume Sing-Song have been rescheduled for the day after tomorrow, as we are assured by our own infallible Professor Johnny Running Dog of a break in the weather at that time.

Let me remind you of the other events sponsored by the Gileadean Research Association that are available to you at

this convention, as part of our Twelfth Symposium. Tomorrow afternoon, Professor Gopal Chatterjee, of the Department of Western Philosophy, University of Baroda, India, will speak on "Krishna and Kali Elements in the State Religion of the Early Gilead Period," and there is a morning presentation on Thursday by Professor Sieglinda Van Buren from the Department of Military History at the University of San Antonio, Republic of Texas. Professor Van Buren will give what I am sure will be a fascinating illustrated lecture on "The Warsaw Tactic: Policies of Urban Core Encirclement in the Gileadean Civil Wars." I am sure all of us will wish to attend these.

I must also remind our keynote speaker - although I am sure it is not necessary - to keep within his time period, as we wish to leave space for questions, and I expect none of us wants to miss lunch, as happened yesterday. (*Laughter.*)

Professor Pieixoto scarcely needs any introduction, as he is well known to all of us, if not personally, then through his extensive publications. These include "Sumptuary Laws Through the Ages: An Analysis of Documents," and the well-known study, "Iran and Gilead: Two Late-Twentieth-Century Monotheocracies, as Seen Through Diaries." As you all know, he is the co-editor, with Professor Knotly Wade, also of Cambridge, of the manuscript under consideration today, and was instrumental in its transcription, annotation, and publication. The title of his talk is "Problems of Authentication in Reference to *The Handmaid's Tale*."

Professor Pieixoto.

Applause.

PIEXOTO:

Thank you. I am sure we all enjoyed our charming Arctic Chair last night at dinner, and now we are enjoying an equally charming Arctic Chair. I use the word "enjoy" in two distinct senses, precluding, of course, the obsolete third. (*Laughter.*)

But let me be serious. I wish, as the title of my little chat implies, to consider some of the problems associated with the *soi-disant* manuscript which is well known to all of you by now, and which goes by the title of *The Handmaid's Tale*. I say *soi-disant* because what we have before us is not the item

in its original form. Strictly speaking, it was not a manuscript at all when first discovered, and bore no title. The superscription "The Handmaid's Tale" was appended to it by Professor Wade, partly in homage to the great Geoffrey Chaucer; but those of you who know Professor Wade informally, as I do, will understand when I say that I am sure all puns were intentional, particularly that having to do with the archaic vulgar signification of the word *tail*; that being, to some extent, the bone, as it were, of contention, in that phase of Gileadean society of which our saga treats. (*Laughter, applause.*)

This item - I hesitate to use the word *document* - was unearthed on the site of what was once the city of Bangor, in what, at the time prior to the inception of the Gileadean regime, would have been the State of Maine. We know that this city was a prominent way-station on what our author refers to as "The Underground Femaleroad," since dubbed by some of our historical wags "The Underground Frailroad." (*Laughter, groans.*) For this reason, our Association has taken a particular interest in it.

The item in its pristine state consisted of a metal foot-locker, U.S. Army issue, *circa* perhaps 1955. This fact of itself need have no significance, as it is known that such foot-lockers were frequently sold as "army surplus" and must therefore have been widespread. Within this foot-locker, which was sealed with tape of the kind once used on packages to be sent by post, were approximately thirty tape cassettes, of the type that became obsolete sometime in the eighties or nineties with the advent of the compact disc.

I remind you that this was not the first such discovery. You are doubtless familiar, for instance, with the item known as "The A.B. Memoirs," located in a garage in a suburb of Seattle, and with "The Diary of P.," excavated by accident during the erection of a new meeting house in the vicinity of what was once Syracuse, New York.

Professor Wade and I were very excited by this new discovery. Luckily we had, several years before, with the aid of our excellent resident antiquarian technician, reconstructed a machine capable of playing such tapes, and we immediately set about the painstaking work of transcription.

There were some thirty tapes in the collection altogether,

with varying proportions of music to spoken word. In general, each tape begins with two or three songs, as camouflage no doubt: then the music is broken off and the speaking voice takes over. The voice is a woman's and, according to our voice-print experts, the same one throughout. The labels on the cassettes were authentic period labels, dating, of course, from some time before the inception of the Early Gilead era, as all such secular music was banned under the regime. There were, for instance, four tapes entitled "Elvis Presley's Golden Years," three of "Folk Songs of Lithuania," three of "Boy George Takes It Off," and two of "Mantovani's Mellow Strings," as well as some titles that sported a mere single tape each: "Twisted Sister at Carnegie Hall" is one of which I am particularly fond.

Although the labels were authentic, they were not always appended to the tape with the corresponding songs. In addition, the tapes were arranged in no particular order, being loose at the bottom of the box; nor were they numbered. Thus it was up to Professor Wade and myself to arrange the blocks of speech in the order in which they appeared to go; but, as I have said elsewhere, all such arrangements are based on some guesswork and are to be regarded as approximate, pending further research.

Once we had the transcription in hand - and we had to go over it several times, owing to the difficulties posed by accent, obscure referents, and archaisms - we had to make some decision as to the nature of the material we had thus so laboriously acquired. Several possibilities confronted us. First, the tapes might be a forgery. As you know, there have been several instances of such forgeries, for which publishers have paid large sums, wishing to trade no doubt on the sensationalism of such stories. It appears that certain periods of history quickly become, both for other societies and for those that follow them, the stuff of not especially edifying legend and the occasion for a good deal of hypocritical self-congratulation. If I may be permitted an editorial aside, allow me to say that in my opinion we must be cautious about passing moral judgement upon the Gileadeans. Surely we have learned by now that such judgements are of necessity culture-specific. Also, Gileadean society was under a good deal of pressure,

demographic and otherwise, and was subject to factors from which we ourselves are happily more free. Our job is not to censure but to understand. (*Applause.*)

To return from my digression: tape like this, however, is very difficult to fake convincingly, and we were assured by the experts who examined them that the physical objects themselves are genuine. Certainly the recording itself, that is, the superimposition of voice upon music tape, could not have been done within the past hundred and fifty years.

Supposing, then, the tapes to be genuine, what of the nature of the account itself? Obviously, it could not have been recorded during the period of time it recounts, since, if the author is telling the truth, no machine or tapes would have been available to her, nor would she have had a place of concealment for them. Also, there is a certain reflective quality about the narrative that would to my mind rule out synchronicity. It has a whiff of emotion recollected, if not in tranquillity, at least *post facto*.

If we could establish an identity for the narrator, we felt, we might be well on the way to an explanation of how this document - let me call it that for the sake of brevity - came into being. To do this, we tried two lines of investigation.

First, we attempted, through old town plans of Bangor and other remaining documentation, to identify the inhabitants of the house that must have occupied the site of the discovery at about that time. Possibly, we reasoned, this house may have been a "safe house" on the Underground Femaleroad during our period, and our author may have been kept hidden in, for instance, the attic or cellar there for some weeks or months, during which she would have had the opportunity to make the recordings. Of course, there was nothing to rule out the possibility that the tapes had been moved to the site in question after they had been made. We hoped to be able to trace and locate the descendants of the hypothetical occupants, whom we hoped might lead us to other material: diaries, perhaps, or even family anecdotes passed down through the generations.

Unfortunately, this trail led nowhere. Possibly these people, if they had indeed been a link in the underground chain, had been discovered and arrested, in which case any documentation referring to them would have been destroyed. So we

pursued a second line of attack. We searched records of the period, trying to correlate known historical personages with the individuals who appear in our author's account. The surviving records of the time are spotty, as the Gileadean regime was in the habit of wiping its own computers and destroying printouts after various purges and internal upheavals, but some printouts remain. Some indeed were smuggled to England, for propaganda use by the various Save-the-Women societies, of which there were many in the British Isles at that time.

We held out no hope of tracing the narrator herself directly. It was clear from internal evidence that she was among the first wave of women recruited for reproductive purposes and allotted to those who both required such services and could lay claim to them through their position in the elite. The regime created an instant pool of such women by the simple tactic of declaring all second marriages and non-marital liaisons adulterous, arresting the female partners, and, on the grounds that they were morally unfit, confiscating the children they already had, who were adopted by childless couples of the upper echelons who were eager for progeny by any means. (In the middle period, this policy was extended to cover all marriages not contracted within the state church.) Men highly placed in the regime were thus able to pick and choose among women who had demonstrated their reproductive fitness by having produced one or more healthy children, a desirable characteristic in an age of plummeting Caucasian birth rates, a phenomenon observable not only in Gilead but in most northern Caucasian societies of the time.

The reasons for this decline are not altogether clear to us. Some of the failure to reproduce can undoubtedly be traced to the widespread availability of birth control of various kinds, including abortion, in the immediate pre-Gilead period. Some infertility, then, was willed, which may account for the differing statistics among Caucasians and non-Caucasians; but the rest was not. Need I remind you that this was the age of the R-strain syphilis and also the infamous AIDS epidemic, which, once they spread to the population at large, eliminated many young sexually active people from the reproductive pool? Stillbirths, miscarriages, and genetic deformities were widespread

and on the increase, and this trend has been linked to the various nuclear-plant accidents, shutdowns, and incidents of sabotage that characterized the period, as well as to leakages from chemical and biological-warfare stockpiles and toxic-waste disposal sites, of which there were many thousands, both legal and illegal - in some instances these materials were simply dumped into the sewage system - and to the uncontrolled use of chemical insecticides, herbicides, and other sprays.

But whatever the causes, the effects were noticeable, and the Gilead regime was not the only one to react to them at the time. Romania, for instance, had anticipated Gilead in the eighties by banning all forms of birth control, imposing compulsory pregnancy tests on the female population, and linking promotion and wage increases to fertility.

The need for what I may call birth services was already recognized in the pre-Gilead period, where it was being inadequately met by "artificial insemination," "fertility clinics," and the use of "surrogate mothers," who were hired for the purpose. Gilead outlawed the first two as irreligious, but legitimized and enforced the third, which was considered to have biblical precedents; they thus replaced the serial polygamy common in the pre-Gilead period with the older form of simultaneous polygamy practised both in early Old Testament times and in the former State of Utah in the nineteenth century. As we know from the study of history, no new system can impose itself upon a previous one without incorporating many of the elements to be found in the latter, as witness the pagan elements in mediaeval Christianity and the evolution of the Russian "K.G.B." from the Czarist secret service that preceded it; and Gilead was no exception to this rule. Its racist policies, for instance, were firmly rooted in the pre-Gilead period, and racist fears provided some of the emotional fuel that allowed the Gilead takeover to succeed as well as it did.

Our author, then, was one of many, and must be seen within the broad outlines of the moment in history of which she was a part. But what else do we know about her, apart from her age, some physical characteristics that could be anyone's, and her place of residence? Not very much. She ap-

pears to have been an educated woman, insofar as a graduate of any North American college of the time may be said to have been educated. (*Laughter, some groans.*) But the woods, as you say, were full of these, so that is no help. She does not see fit to supply us with her original name, and indeed all official records of it would have been destroyed upon her entry into the Rachel and Leah Re-education Centre. "Offred" gives no clue, since, like "Ofglen" and "Ofwarren," it was a patronymic, composed of the possessive preposition and the first name of the gentleman in question. Such names were taken by these women upon their entry into a connection with the household of a specific Commander, and relinquished by them upon leaving it.

The other names in the document are equally useless for the purposes of identification and authentication. "Luke" and "Nick" drew blanks, as did "Moira" and "Janine." There is a high probability that these were, in any case, pseudonyms, adopted to protect these individuals should the tapes be discovered. If so, this would substantiate our view that the tapes were made *inside* the borders of Gilead, rather than outside, to be smuggled back for use by the Mayday underground.

Elimination of the above possibilities left us with one remaining. If we could identify the elusive "Commander," we felt, at least some progress would have been made. We argued that such a highly placed individual had probably been a participant in the first of the top-secret Sons of Jacob Think Tanks, at which the philosophy and social structure of Gilead were hammered out. These were organized shortly after the recognition of the superpower arms stalemate and the signing of the classified Spheres of Influence Accord, which left the superpowers free to deal, unhampered by interference, with the growing number of rebellions within their own empires. The official records of the Sons of Jacob meetings were destroyed after the middle-period Great Purge, which discredited and liquidated a number of the original architects of Gilead; but we have access to some information through the diary kept in cipher by Wilfred Limpkin, one of the sociobiologists present. (As we know, the sociobiological theory of natural polygamy was used as a scientific justification for some of the odder practices of the regime, just as Darwinism was used by earlier ideologies.)

From the Limpkin material we know that there are two possible candidates, that is, two whose names incorporate the element "Fred": Frederick R. Waterford and B. Frederick Judd. No photographs survive of either, although Limpkin describes the latter as a stuffed shirt, and, I quote, "somebody for whom foreplay is what you do on a golf course." (*Laughter.*) Limpkin himself did not long survive the inception of Gilead, and we have his diary only because he foresaw his own end and placed it with his sister-in-law in Calgary.

Waterford and Judd both have characteristics that recommend them to us. Waterford possessed a background in market research, and was, according to Limpkin, responsible for the design of the female costumes and for the suggestion that the Handmaids wear red, which he seems to have borrowed from the uniforms of German prisoners of war in Canadian "P.O.W." camps of the Second World War era. He seems to have been the originator of the term "Particulation," which he lifted from an exercise program popular sometime in the last third of the century; the collective rope ceremony, however, was suggested by an English village custom of the seventeenth century. "Salvaging" may have been his too, although by the time of Gilead's inception it had spread from its origin in the Philippines to become a general term for the elimination of one's political enemies. As I have said elsewhere, there was little that was truly original with or indigenous to Gilead: its genius was synthesis.

Judd, on the other hand, seems to have been less interested in packaging and more concerned with tactics. It was he who suggested the use of an obscure "C.I.A." pamphlet on the destabilization of foreign governments as a strategic handbook for the Sons of Jacob, and he, too, who drew up the early hit-lists of prominent "Americans" of the time. He also is suspected of having orchestrated the President's Day Massacre, which must have required maximum infiltration of the security system surrounding Congress, and without which the Constitution could never have been suspended. The National Homelands and the Jewish boat-person plan were both his, as was the idea of privatizing the Jewish repatriation scheme, with the result that more than one boatload of Jews was simply dumped into the Atlantic, to maximize profits. From what we know of Judd, this would not have bothered him

much. He was a hard-liner, and is credited by Limpkin with the remark, "Our big mistake was teaching them to read. We won't do that again."

It is Judd who is credited with devising the form, as opposed to the name, of the Participation ceremony, arguing that it was not only a particularly horrifying and effective way of ridding yourself of subversive elements, but that it would also act as a steam valve for the female elements in Gilead. Scapegoats have been notoriously useful throughout history, and it must have been most gratifying for these Handmaids, so rigidly controlled at other times, to be able to tear a man apart with their bare hands every once in a while. So popular and effective did this practice become that it was regularized in the middle period, when it took place four times a year, on solstices and equinoxes. There are echoes here of the fertility rites of early Earth-goddess cults. As we heard at the panel discussion yesterday afternoon, Gilead was, although undoubtedly patriarchal in form, occasionally matriarchal in content, like some sectors of the social fabric that gave rise to it. As the architects of Gilead knew, to institute an effective totalitarian system or indeed any system at all you must offer some benefits and freedoms, at least to a privileged few, in return for those you remove.

In this connection a few comments upon the crack female control agency known as the "Aunts" is perhaps in order. Judd - according to the Limpkin material - was of the opinion from the outset that the best and most cost-effective way to control women for reproductive and other purposes was through women themselves. For this there were many historical precedents; in fact, no empire imposed by force or otherwise has ever been without this feature: control of the indigenous by members of their own group. In the case of Gilead, there were many women willing to serve as Aunts, either because of a genuine belief in what they called "traditional values," or for the benefits they might thereby acquire. When power is scarce, a little of it is tempting. There was, too, a negative inducement: childless or infertile or older women who were not married could take service in the Aunts and thereby escape redundancy, and consequent shipment to the infamous Colonies, which were composed of portable

populations used mainly as expendable toxic cleanup squads, though if lucky you could be assigned to less hazardous tasks, such as cotton picking and fruit harvesting.

The idea, then, was Judd's, but the implementation has the mark of Waterford upon it. Who else among the Sons of Jacob Think-Tankers would have come up with the notion that the Aunts should take names derived from commercial products available to women in the immediate pre-Gilead period, and thus familiar and reassuring to them - the names of cosmetic lines, cake mixes, frozen desserts, and even medicinal remedies? It was a brilliant stroke, and confirms us in our opinion that Waterford was, in his prime, a man of considerable ingenuity. So, in his own way, was Judd.

Both of these gentlemen were known to have been childless, and thus eligible for a succession of Handmaids. Professor Wade and I have speculated in our joint paper, "The Notion of 'Seed' in Early Gilead," that both - like many of the Commanders - had come in contact with a sterility-causing virus that was developed by secret pre-Gilead gene-splicing experiments with mumps, and which was intended for insertion into the supply of caviar used by top officials in Moscow. (The experiment was abandoned after the Spheres of Influence Accord, because the virus was considered too uncontrollable and therefore too dangerous by many, although some wished to sprinkle it over India).

However, neither Judd nor Waterford was married to a woman who was or ever had been known either as "Pam" or as "Serena Joy." This latter appears to have been a somewhat malicious invention by our author. Judd's wife's name was Bambi Mae, and Waterford's was Thelma. The latter had, however, once worked as a television personality of the type described. We know this from Limpkin, who makes several snide remarks about it. The regime itself took pains to cover up such former lapses from orthodoxy by the spouses of its elite.

The evidence on the whole favours Waterford. We know, for instance, that he met his end, probably soon after the events our author describes, in one of the earliest purges; he was accused of liberal tendencies, of being in possession of a substantial and unauthorized collection of heretical pictorial and

literary materials, and of harbouring a subversive. This was before the regime began holding its trials in secret and was still televising them, so the events were recorded in England via satellite and are on videotape deposit in our Archives. The shots of Waterford are not good, but they are clear enough to establish that his hair was indeed grey.

As for the subversive Waterford was accused of harbouring, this could have been "Offred" herself, as her flight would have placed her in this category. More likely it was "Nick," who, by the evidence of the very existence of the tapes, must have helped "Offred" to escape. The way in which he was able to do this marks him as a member of the shadowy Mayday underground, which was not identical with the Underground Femaleroad but had connections with it. The latter was purely a rescue operation, the former quasi-military. A number of Mayday operatives are known to have infiltrated the Gileadean power structure at the highest levels, and the placement of one of their members as chauffeur to Waterford would certainly have been a coup; a double coup, as "Nick" must have been at the same time a member of the Eyes, as such chauffeurs and personal servants often were. Waterford would, of course, have been aware of this, but as all high-level Commanders were automatically directors of the Eyes, he would not have paid a great deal of attention to it and would not have let it interfere with his infraction of what he considered to be minor rules. Like most early Gilead Commanders who were later purged, he considered his position to be above attack. The style of Middle Gilead was more cautious.

This is our guesswork. Supposing it to be correct - supposing, that is, that Waterford was indeed the "Commander" - many gaps remain. Some of them could have been filled by our anonymous author, had she had a different turn of mind. She could have told us much about the workings of the Gileadean empire, had she had the instincts of a reporter or a spy. What would we not give, now, for even twenty pages or so of printout from Waterford's private computer! However, we must be grateful for any crumbs the Goddess of History has designed to vouchsafe us.

As for the ultimate fate of our narrator, it remains obscure. Was she smuggled over the border of Gilead, into what was

then Canada, and did she make her way thence to England? This would have been wise, as the Canada of that time did not wish to antagonize its powerful neighbour, and there were roundups and extraditions of such refugees. If so, why did she not take her taped narrative with her? Perhaps her journey was sudden; perhaps she feared interception. On the other hand, she may have been recaptured. If she did indeed reach England, why did she not make her story public, as so many did upon reaching the outside world? She may have feared retaliation against "Luke," supposing him to have been still alive (which is an improbability), or even against her daughter; for the Gileadean regime was not above such measures, and used them to discourage adverse publicity in foreign countries. More than one incautious refugee was known to receive a hand, ear, or foot, vacuum-packed express, hidden in, for instance, a tin of coffee. Or perhaps she was among those escaped Handmaids who had difficulty adjusting to life in the outside world, once they got there, after the protected existence they had led. She may have become, like them, a recluse. We do not know.

We can only deduce, also, the motivations for "Nick's" engineering of her escape. We can assume that once her companion Ofglen's association with Mayday had been discovered, he himself was in some jeopardy, for as he well knew, as a member of the Eyes, Offred herself was certain to be interrogated. The penalties for unauthorized sexual activity with a Handmaid were severe, nor would his status as an Eye necessarily protect him. Gilead society was Byzantine in the extreme, and any transgression might be used against one by one's undeclared enemies within the regime. He could, of course, have assassinated her himself, which might have been the wiser course, but the human heart remains a factor, and, as we know, both of them thought she might be pregnant by him. What male of the Gilead period could resist the possibility of fatherhood, so redolent of status, so highly prized? Instead, he called in a rescue team of Eyes, who may or may not have been authentic but in any case were under his orders. In doing so he may well have brought about his own downfall. This too we shall never know.

Did our narrator reach the outside world safely and build a

new life for herself? Or was she discovered in her attic hiding place, arrested, sent to the Colonies or to Jezebel's, or even executed? Our document, though in its own way eloquent, is on these subjects mute. We may call Eurydice forth from the world of the dead, but we cannot make her answer; and when we turn to look at her we glimpse her only for a moment, before she slips from our grasp and flees. As all historians know, the past is a great darkness, and filled with echoes. Voices may reach us from it; but what they say to us is imbued with the obscurity of the matrix out of which they come; and, try as we may, we cannot always decipher them precisely in the clearer light of our own day.

Applause.

Are there any questions?



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

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

Skill learning 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 active; finally developed, passed on to a consideration of optimum temperature, salinity, viscosity, ripened eggs were kept; and, meanwhile the detached and ripened eggs were kept; and, meanwhile his charges to the work tables, actually showed them how it was let out drop by drop on to the specially prepared slides of the microscopes; how the eggs which it contained were inspected for abnormalities, counted and transferred to 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, the fertilized ova went back to the liquor and again, how it was again immersed, and, if necessary, yet again; here the fertilized eggs were brought out again of the incubators, while the females were again immersed, until definitely bottled; where the Gammars, Detoxins and Epsilons were brought out again, after only thirty-six hours, to undergo Bookanovsky's test.

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 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, and stamp collectors compose the backbone of society.

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

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? Forty? His hair was grey, his eyes blue, his skin brownish-red.

'This is the DHC', said the DHC, and the students stared at him in silence. This institution, in their opinion, deserved the best training, said the DHC, and the DHC deserved the best training.

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 unparous 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 age. And in exceptional cases we can make one ovary yield the same age.

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?"

"Becoming to a little Limerick and twelve in this Centre, Mr. Foster repiled without hesitation. He spoke very quickly, had a vivacious blue eye, and took an evident pleasure in quoting figures. Sixteen thousand and twelve in evidence they've eighty-nine batches of identicals. But of course they've seventeen thousand mark. But then they have unfair sand five hundred; and Mombasa has actually touched the twelve thousand and seven hundred children already, either at this moment. Only just eighteen months old. Over twelve thousand seven hundred children already. Either if we can, I'm working on a wonderful Delta-Milins ovary of his chin was challenging, still, we mean to beat them though (but the height of combat was in his eyes and the lift working with European material. Still, he added, with a twinkle in embryo. And still going strong. We'll beat these boys the benefit of your expert knowledge."

"That's the spirit I like!" cried the Director, and clapped him yet."

Mr. Foster on the shoulder. "Come along with us and give Mr. Foster smile modesty, "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! 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 intermittent procedure on the band.

Next to the Limers stood the Matriculators. The procession advanced; one by one the eggs were transferred from their test-tubes to the larger containers; deftly the peritac-sion advanced; membership of Bokanovsky Group - details of fertilization, membership of Bokanovsky Group - details passed, and it was the turn of the labelled. Hereditiy, date saline solution poured in . . . and already the bottle had real lining was slit, the morula dropped into place, the peritac-sion advanced; one by one the eggs were transferred from their test-tubes to the larger containers; deftly the peritac-sion advanced; one by one the eggs were transferred from the proper size came shooting up in little lifts from the Organ Store in the sub-basement. Whizz and then, click!

"Distributed in such and such quantities," said Mr. Foster. "So many individuals, of such and such quality," said Mr. Foster. "On the basis of which they make their calculations," "And co-ordinated every afternoon," "Brought up to date every morning," "Containing all the relevant information," added the Director.

"Distributed in such and such quantities," "Unforeseen wastages promptly made good," "The optimum Decanting Rate at any given moment," "Prompty," 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-

which, in consequence, it had to be supplied. Shoved 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. Hit 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 females and for the embryos every thirty per cent of the female 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 freemasons - they do have just the slightest tendency to grow beards, but sterile. Quaranteed sterile. Which brings us at last, concluded Mr Foster, out of the realm of mere slavery 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 predesine 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-surogate pump of a passing bottle. The hum of the electric motor深ened by fractions of a tone as he turned the nuts. Down, down . . . A final twist, therefore passes through the lung at longer intervals; therefore gives the embryo less oxygen. Nothing like therefore passes through the lung at long intervals; Foster explained. "The surrogate goes round slower; Foster explained. "The surrogate goes round slower; asked an ingenuous student.

"But why do you want to keep the embryo below par?" he rubbed his hands.

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

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

"The lower the caste," said Mr Foster, "the shorter the dwarfs. At less than seventy, eyeless monsters,

Who are no use at all," concluded Mr Foster. Whereas (his voice became condescending 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 embryo-rotkett-plane engineers was just passing the eleven hundredth metre mark on Rack 3. A special mechanism kept their contractors 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 eight 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 well-being; 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 Galleries, 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 footsees 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 Nurses' 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."

- The perspectives on the society that has been depicted in the text
- The reading of the text
- Values and attitudes of the text
- The assumptions that underpin the text

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 grand 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 arcania and immost 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 racetrack 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 hunched 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 excrements 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 rapid, 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 convey 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.

Central Themes	What attitudes are expressed towards this theme?	How has this theme been conveyed?	Why has this technique been used in this way?	Morals and Morality	Victims and Victimization	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 hierarchical 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 necessities 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 battlefield (not every limb, person, or finger can be saved), and wars that are supposedly¹ 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 richardxtripp. Bookmark the [permalink](#).

- The perspectives on the society that has been depicted in the text
- The reading of the text
- Values and attitudes of the text
- The assumptions that underpin the text

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

Paragraph on Brave New World

*Very long hand writing - 100% -
B.W.B. 10/12/10*

Texts of the dystopian genre work to emphasise and draw criticism upon ominous tendencies of present day trends, societal and political norms. The influence of the type of criticism that dystopian texts aim to project emerged, primarily, from the post-World War Two era and the fear of nuclear warfare. Many critics from that era established a moral criticism upon advancements and potential threats of modern society through the dystopian genre of creating an unpleasant, imaginary future society based upon the illusion of "Utopia". Within Brave New World by Aldous Huxley, the perspective that collective efficiency holds greater importance than individuality for social stability is portrayed in order for the author to emphasise the impact that this factor has on social functioning. It is also presented in order to signify current social situations that the author implies are detrimental to society, such as technological advancements and the overenthusiastic embrace of scientific discovery. In this way, the perspectives and values explored within the chapter are also resistant to the reader. The values that have developed from the perspective of collective efficiency are portrayed through the use of extra-diegetic narration that creates a confident tone through the construction of imagery. Detached and intrusive statements through the construction of syntax also assert the values that Huxley aims to portray through the emphasised perspective. The "Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre" is presented as the institution practicing "modern fertilizing processes" that are "undergone voluntarily for the good of society." This is achieved through the narrators detached and intrusive voice which exposes the setting and, thus, the values held within the setting; "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." It is evident that the society aims for stability and efficiency through artificial and totalitarian means, as expressed through the narrator and perspective. This efficiency for collective "progress" in place of "individuality" is portrayed as being a value held by the society because it acts as a "major instrument for social stability!" Individual concerns, therefore, are implied through the values of the chapter as being unstable to society's preservation and welfare and that, alternatively, stability can be maintained by taking away a degree of human individuality and replacing it with a type of "collective" efficiency. The perspective ^{of the book} emphasizes that the "conditioning" and "predestination" of embryos to produce "uniform batches" of specific castes, is designed to make "people like their unescapable social identity!" Thus, it is portrayed to the reader that the society values ~~individuality~~ ^{collectiveness} and conditioning rather than individuality because "that is the secret to happiness and virtue."

Society is the aggregate of individual beings living together for a desired aim of order and to achieve particular purposes. Within society, uniform ideas, behaviours and aims begin to emerge in order for the society to work towards a type of "collective" efficiency for the purpose of social preservation and welfare. Two concepts regarding the nature and influences upon social functioning include collectivism and individualism; each with fundamental differences regarding moral concern. Whilst the two retain these differences, observably, they appear to interact in particular ways because society has a collective aim but is, at core, composed of individuals. The question is continuous and has been persistent throughout history; where do humans make their stand? Are we naturally collectivist or naturally individualistic? Which way of organising society is the most efficient?

Brave New World (BNW), a dystopian novel by Aldous Huxley, works satirically to emphasise such a notion and criticise one perspective that has emerged out of this questioning; that collectivism holds greater importance to social stability and functioning than individualism. To understand the criticism of the author towards this idea, with which the reader is also resistant to, it is crucial to understand both ideas respectively. Individualist will act in such a way that places private concerns above the collective interest and will align with the principals that all action initiated is for the benefit of one's self interest. Whilst this sounds rather self-absorbed, it is important to note that an individual's "self-interest" may in fact be aimed towards benefiting society and creating harmony and peace amongst the community. The collectivist idea asserts that the group or society is the central unit of moral concern and that the individual's life belongs to society for the "greater good". Dystopian texts frequently work to portray such moral and ethical questions in order to criticise or present perspectives upon ominous tendencies of modern day trends and social or political concepts. In Brave New World, the values that underpin the collectivist idea, as being necessary and beneficial to society, include the advantage of classical conditioning and predestination of artificially developed embryos in order to integrate them into what is an illusion of a Utopian society.

Whilst chapter one of Brave New World establishes this moral ground of collectivism and presents it to the reader, it is obvious that the perspective and values of the author are critical in regards to this, as the text has a confident satirical tone. One must ask the question as to what exactly Huxley is criticising about collectivism. It is true that this way of organising society is beneficial and important to social integration and it is also true that individuals sacrifice certain personal freedoms to live in a society with laws and regulations aiming to benefit the people as a whole. Humans sacrifice a degree of personal freedoms and motivations in order for law and order to reside in the moral considerations of the community members. If everyone operated purely as a result of their self-interest, then murder and rape and exploitation would be possible without consequence. This is clearly not the case. It is evident, therefore, that society does function in a type of collective manner, so would it make sense for Huxley to be criticising these positive values of collectivism that do indeed aim for the "greater good"? Rather, Huxley aims to criticise the means of achieving collectivism; the totalitarian and state control that works in Brave New World to condition and predestine individuals by not allowing individualism to naturally be embraced in the first place. The negative aspects of imposing collectivism through totalitarian means include the simple fact that human rights and freedoms are denied unless they are deemed "safe" to societies preservation. If questions arise

regarding anything deemed unacceptable or challenging to the control system, the individuals are oppressed further. Having knowledge of this type of organisation through historical events regarding the Communist system, collectivism in its governed manner is only stable until someone questions how it functions because questioning arises from individual thought. In Brave New World, collectivism is only stable in the sense that a totalitarian government denies the society of personal freedom and rather conditions them to place their moral concern at the hands of the community. If something requires control and action, is it then stable? Stable in the sense that it can naturally be upheld? In this sense, collectivism, in its desired form, is not real and cannot be achieved on any basis other than if it benefits self-interest or is imposed upon a society that is not aware of an alternative. People may join together for a particular aim; in a group, community, political or societal setting, however, the desire to join together must still come from individual consideration as to why that collectivist setting is necessary, whether that be because it is beneficial to the individual's self-interests, or whether it aligns with the individual's moral considerations. It is not natural for people to think in this "controlled" collectivist manner. Individualism is the natural form of human nature. It is evident on metaphysical, epistemological and ethical levels and outweighs the type of collectivist operations frequently imposed through political systems.

Metaphysically, human beings are distinct individuals. It is an observable fact that we have our own bodies, own minds and own lives. Frederick Douglass states that humans are distinct by nature; "I cannot walk upon your legs or you upon mine. I cannot breathe for you or you for me...we are distinct persons that are each equally provided with faculties necessary to our individual existence." When the individual then considers knowledge, it is through personal perception, generalizations and integrations that the individual self understands and forms principalities. Whilst humans learn from each other and may transmit information, any transmission of such knowledge must be subject to the individuals perceiving and integrating. "Without individuals there would be no knowledge because it is through their sensory system that the natural world enters cognition." Epistemology supports individualism and denies that collectivism can be achieved naturally through the means of knowledge. Ethics achieves the same outcome. Questions of ethics arise because individuals need principles. Morality causes an individual to live and create personal principle standards. Whilst morals and ethics transmit into society and have influence over an individual's standards, it still remains true that the "social" morale must, in some way, abide by a person's self-interests, or moral principles that they have challenged and then accepted within themselves.

Collectivism is positive in theory; work for the greater good of your community and everyone will thrive, however, in the totalitarian collectivist scenario, man has no rights except those which the society permits him/her to enjoy. Huxley points out that the only way to achieve total collectivism is to impose it under a totalitarian government or control system. It cannot be stable unless governed, censored and restricted. Where is the freedom? Where is the knowledge? Where can we find the entrepreneurs and philosophers and where can variation be integrated? The means to achieving "Utopia" prove far worse than simply living individualistically; the natural human form of body and mind.

What about ethics? How are they imposed? Is down but collectively imposed upon for the Communist Good? Is living in the law which

The following is a persuasive essay challenging the perspective of the text in Brave New World where if the increasing advance of technology of the future is relied on by humanity, it will mean that society will lead to a complete oppressed and totalitarian governed society that will withdraw completely from values of freedom, creativity and choice.

It is vital that humanity has the development of technology of ever-increasing complexity as it opens new windows for human capabilities. The 1932 text Brave New World (BNW) by Aldous Huxley portrays a satirical dystopian future that underpins the perspective that having too many advancements into technology in which humanity then relies on will result in a complete oppressed and totalitarian controlled world. In present society, this is not true. It is plainly a nihilistic perspective. Society may have looked to potentially evolve that way when Huxley lived in the early nineteen hundreds where fears of chemical and nuclear warfare, as well as Communication, were current concerns. But this is the 21st century. Ironically it is those fears of such advancements in technology that global invasion and war is nearly unspoken of in our generation, as it known that it would result in the mutually assured destruction of the entire world. We humans have become self-aware of our own destructive power. We do however have poverty, disease, cancer and some peoples' stupidity to worry about. But that's why technology in our day and age is so important. For one, instead of creating mindless drones like Huxley predicted, technology can and will improve education globally. Advancements like biotechnology can not only cure life-threatening diseases and disabilities, but also help bio-engineer crops for food production. This is proof that there are mass majorities of people who voluntarily care for human welfare and use technology to do so. It is increasingly being proved that technology is only the next stage of human evolution, a natural process of biological improvement that occurs to all organisms uncontrollably over the course of time. It is not the beginning of the end of humanities' freedom, creativity and choice, as BNW perceives. It is the start of a new chapter of the world, were mistakes before made by human inexperience, are now being patched-up and fixed with new innovations humanity continually creates. Brave New World is ill-conceived as a futurology as it rejects the perspective of moral principal and ignores the human potential for improvement.

Educating people properly is a global issue, and always has been. Education is one of the most important endeavors humanity can take, as Martin Luther King Jr. put it: "Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity". Technology can improve teaching and learning, as well as solving cost, distance and learning capability issues. In BNW Huxley creates a perspective that infers that the most effective, efficient and advanced form of technological-based education is social conditioning. This is not true. Many professionals who study the area of psychiatry and education such as Dr. Brian Clegg and Dr. Christine McGregor agree that using conditioning as a form of technological-based education "...cuts off individual thought processes" and "...decreases any intuitively, initiative or creativity in an individual" and also "...stops people questioning what they are told...". Modern educational social institutions like high schools recognize that technology, when used correctly, can help teach and cater for all types of learning styles whether or not it be for audio learners through using videos, visual learners through websites/ downloadable pdfs or for tactile learners by incorporating educational online games and quizzes into their studies. Instead of the teacher being the only source of help in a classroom, students can presently access web sites, online tutorials, and more to assist them through laptops and tablets. This also allows education to not stop at the end of the school day because students have access to teachers, resources, and assignments via the internet at home. The modern

student can also get help and tutoring at any time, whether from the teacher by email or through an online collaboration on educational based social platforms such as through Student Portal and Connect. It is a goal recognized by the United Nations and other institutions like Rotary International for educational-based technology to be available to as many students as possible so that statistics like graduation rates and job opportunities can increase worldwide, especially in developing countries. This can only be effectively done with technology as it is a flexible learning system, something that is incredibly sought after as a method of teaching in the 21st century. Huxley did not acknowledge this perspective as he only saw technology as an extent of the abuse of media, propaganda or a system solely used for mechanized efficiency, not an extent of human invention that has the potential to do more. This perspective Huxley predicted is no seen threat in the present or the future. Technology will not lead to an oppressed society controlled by a totalitarian government. There are too many self-aware, educated populations on this planet who are exposed to technology that allows for critical thinking, which is increased by vast amounts of technologically aided education.

Another way that technology is of great use in our modern era is within the field of genetic engineering. In BNW, Huxley explores the perspective that humans would collectively, when possible, use the great power that accompanies tissue engineering, gene therapy and DNA synthesis to go to extreme lengths and biologically upgrade the whole of the human race in an abundant factory-style way, past what nature would allow, essentially cheating death. This perspective lacks consideration of moral principle. It would take away the value of family. How would you feel you knew your future children and grandchildren were to be grown and "hatched" like industrially cultured Battery chickens? Would you allow it? How many other people in the world do you think would allow it? The answer is a very small minority. Fortunately in our society there are people who use bio-technology to culture cells and tissues for the modification of living organisms for positive human purposes that help many of those who need more food, have a fatal disease or a disability and want to improve their tough lifestyles. For the production of sustainable food sources, biotechnology in agriculture increases the crop production which makes it double or even higher than normal harvest. It has the ability to give biological protection from disease and pests, a minor necessity for chemical insecticides. Biotechnology is capable of conveying genetic qualities of the crops that can withstand the changing climate condition, obtain an increase of nutritional qualities. Benefits of biotechnology can also be experienced in the medical institution. Its technological application includes pharmaceutical products and medicines as well as human therapy. It helps produce large quantities of protein for nutritional supplements and insulin for diabetic patient treatment. In gene therapy, in which is the most successful result of biotechnology, research is used to cure aids and cancer. BNW only showcased the perspective that biotechnology could only do more bad than good, because to Huxley's early 1900s' standard of technological advancement, this field of technology was too close to the abilities of God. However, on our modern scale of technological advancement and future potential, biotechnology is no form of miracle. Only just another tool people have chosen to use to help each other.

To rebut, there is a perspective in BNW that is right in underpinning how technology does take a huge part in what seems to be our modern obsession as a race with transhumanism. Transhumanism is a movement that aims to understand what makes one human, and how we

can surpass our natural limitations. It believes that there is an imperative to enhance our capabilities and those limitations to those abilities can be overcome. More importantly, it believes that technology and science are the keys to overcoming them. BNW does show a perspective on the fact that there's not a single aspect of the human experience that hasn't been touched by technology. Everything from industry, to medicine, to socializing, to how we work has been fundamentally reshaped by technology. Technology can also change human physiology in terms of characteristics and abilities, maybe even oppressing them. Want to be smarter? You can take a Nootropic. Want to perceive the world with more detail and more information? Put on Google Glasses. Want to get stronger or more physically agile? There are medicines, steroids or robotic exoskeletons. If it's true that technology has started to move away from merely making our lives more convenient. Now it has the potential to change every aspect of what we are as humans. What are those limitations we endeavor to overcome? They could be life expectancy. They could be mental acumen and intelligence. They could also be physical in nature, such as one's strength, the speed in which one runs a race, or perhaps the way one metabolizes food. Technologies and medicines that address these limitations are constantly being released, developed, and improved upon. More and more enhancement supplements or drugs are hitting the shelves of stores, which are also being prescribed by doctors. But what does this mean for our society? Are we all heading towards becoming monotonously all the same person as one species in our search for perfection? We keep conforming to the 'social norm' based on what we think everybody else likes or expects from us. Are we completely losing individuality as a value? For millennia, humans lived within their biological boundaries, never overcoming them. Now humans are abusing technology, to the point where a type of societal control like totalitarianism may need to be put in place before things get out of hand. Huxley wanted this to be a clear perspective in BNW as a form of a warning, are we ignoring it?

In conclusion, the 1932 text *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley portrays a satirical dystopian future that underpins the false perspective that having too many advancements into technology in which humanity then relies on will result in a complete oppressed and totalitarian controlled world. In many ways this perspective is not true because, as technology aids the improvement of education, people become self-aware, becoming critical thinkers, making it unlikely that a totalitarian government can overrun as a means of total societal control. Instead of making the main sole purpose of the potential power of bio-engineering to cheat death, society is actually using it for positive human purposes for those who need improvements in their disadvantaged lifestyles. Yes Technology makes up the foundation of modern society but it is through good intention. It is not the beginning of the end of humanities' freedom, creativity and choice, as BNW perceives. It is a misconceived futurology because Huxley did not factor in humanity's moral principal or potential for evaluation and improvement. Technology is only the start of a new chapter of the world, were mistakes before made by human inexperience are now being patched-up and fixed with new innovations humanity continually creates; not the beginning of the end of humanity.

Brave New World- Aldous Huxley

Although dystopian fiction is regarded as a popular genre in our contemporary society aimed mostly for a teenage audience, it has its origins in the genre of futuristic writing, which had a strong political message satirising previous Utopian literature. The 1932 text, *Brave New World*, is set in a theoretically utopian future by Aldous Huxley. The text portrays Huxley's personal perspectives through satire which question capitalism and totalitarianism, leading to a resistant reading of his ideas such as an over reliance on technology and a society which doesn't realise that it is oppressed. Historically, during the time of Huxley there was a spike in modern developments, with the Second Industrial Revolution and World War II paving the way for technological revolutionaries like Henry Ford to create efficient construction and factory lines. This is referenced to within the text in the setting "A.F" 632, for "After Ford" 662, a satire to our present time "A.C" for "After Christ". Henry Ford is portrayed as the future's Christ figure as he is inferred to have created the new way of life and its laws on the scaffold of technology. Huxley questions why values such as individuality, autonomy and self-determination must be sacrificed in order to achieve a 'Utopian' world through his use of technological language, using neologisms and giving familiar words a new meaning. In chapter One, Huxley uses this to construct a detailed scene set in a futuristic setting, AF 632, effectively drafting a picture of the complex and arguably confusing society where his characters come to life. One of the ways in which Huxley creates his future world is by devising a nomenclature that is specific to the futuristic setting. In *Brave New World*, the reader notices all sorts of neologisms, words that are comprised of specific historical and political references but which have been given new meaning. Some examples of these words within the first chapter include "Bokonovskied", "hypnopaedic," and the "Podsnap's Technique". At the same time, Huxley takes familiar words and challenge the reader to approach and interpret them differently by giving them a new meaning, such as when describing the growth of a baby; "...a bokonovskied egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo..." Readers are positioned to react negatively to these new world values of total reliance on technology that uses biological, psychological and social conditioning as they conflict deeply with their ingrained understanding of "natural" human instincts and behaviors that are a norm in present modern society. Together, the effect of these new values is to create discomfort and even confusion in the reader, provoking questions on basic assumptions about the organization of totalitarian society and the nature of our human relationships and rights which are seen to have to be sacrificed in able to create a 'perfect' yet purely capitalist world.

Utopia

When one thinks about a utopian society, they generally go straight to a society in which everyone is equal; an egalitarianist society, in other words. This idea is the entire reason behind why many people in today's world rally for equal rights across the spectrum- they believe that an equal society means a utopian society. The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas by Ursula Le Guin is a political allegory, as it bases its plot line around today's views and beliefs on equality. As a general stereotype, it can be seen in civilisation that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. In other words, our society believes that the majority is more important than the minority. The text describes a seemingly utopic world where everyone is happy and equal, however its entire world runs on the misery and mistreatment of one child. I believe that this symbolises our modern Western society, and serves as a warning to our government about the commonly held value of the needs of the many outweighing the needs of the few. This value is why numerous people in today's world tend to rally for equality, because they know that without it, there will always be suffering present, even in a seemingly perfect world.

Egalitarianism is the doctrine in which everyone is considered an equal, no matter their gender, sex, or the colour of their skin. This ideology is the perfect recipe for a utopian world, as it means there is no discrimination, and everyone is happy. Right now our government is trying to portray to us that they believe in egalitarianism, and that they are rallying for the same values as we are. However, if this were the case, wouldn't everyone get paid equally? ~~but everyone~~ Would Caucasian people be targeted by police just as much as African-Americans do? Just ~~but~~ because we use chocolate eggs instead of Easter eggs at Easter time in order to not offend people who don't believe in Christianity, doesn't mean our society and government don't value the majority more than minority groups. It is a proven fact that in America, when someone becomes a police officer, they are told to watch African-Americans extra carefully. So if our government really values equality and taking care of our minority groups, why is this still told to American police officers?

Although some may not see it, our society is based on keeping the majority happy, and sometimes recognising certain minority groups. For example, the holiday of Christmas is shoved down every-day people's throats, with Christmas themed movies shown around the clock on television, chain stores selling Christmas items from early November onwards, and Christmas trees sitting on every corner of every street. If our government is trying so hard to create an equal society, why isn't Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim year where strict fasting is observed from dawn to sunset, just as popularised as Christmas? Why isn't Hanukkah, a Jewish festival, televised and discussed just as much? Changing the words "Merry Christmas" to "Happy Holidays" doesn't defeat the purpose and foundation of Christmas, as everyone now knows what it is about thanks to the constant advertising of it.

I strongly believe that egalitarianism should be a worldwide focus, as it has the ability to provide us a utopian society- one that we all aim to live in. However, the ideology of egalitarianism is similar to communism (a society in which each person contributes and receives according to their needs), as it works perfectly in theory but not so much in reality. In other words, no matter how hard we try to make everyone equal, there will always be someone who is unhappy with the system. At present, people of European descent are much more favoured in the world, making them a majority group. If equality is reached, I can guarantee that one ethnic group will try to step up to be "more than" everyone else, therefore disrupting the idea of an equal society. Consequently, although egalitarianism works in theory, it doesn't necessarily work in reality.

The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas- Ursula Le Guin

Dystopian texts represent an imaginary future world where the illusion of a perfect society is maintained through control; whether it is bureaucratic, technological, or totalitarian. Dystopian texts became popular during and after World War II, as the threat of the end of the world through nuclear warfare became real. The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas (TOW) by Ursula Le Guin is a political allegory that presents the perspective of the happiness of the many outweigh the happiness of the few. TOW depicts the story of a seemingly utopic world that itself presents a utilitarianist society, where actions are right if they are useful or for the benefit of a majority, through the use of symbolism. The value of majority over minority that is brought forward when reading the text symbolises the current views Western societies and governments have- making TOW a political allegory. "Their tears at the bitter injustice dry when they begin to perceive the terrible justice of reality, and to accept it." infers that once the characters in TOW realise that the child's suffering benefits them they begin to ignore it and instead focus on "the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships, and the kindly weathers of their skies..." Utilitarianism is also evident in the novel The Road by Cormac McCarthy, as the man constantly tries to do what is best for him and the boy no matter how high the consequences. TOW also symbolises how far the idea of morality will stretch before people become 'selfish' and choose what is best for the majority. For example, in today's society there are many people who claim to be activists but will stop at the idea of having to fight against government control or majority beliefs. In TOW, when the citizens of Omelas are first shown the mistreated child, they feel anger and guilt, however this soon changes as they realise just how much their lives would change if they acted out against it. Therefore, TOW represents the idea of a modern Western utilitarianist society, and serves as a warning to our government about the currently held value of the needs of the majority, outweighing the needs of the few.

