ITHAKA 2015

JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), MUMBAI

SCIENCE FICTION AND DYSTOPIA

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ITHAKA2015

Annual Journal of the Department of English,
St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Mumbai

Science Fiction and Dystopia

Published November 2015
© ITHAKA JOURNAL, the Department of English,
St. Xavier's College, Mumbai

The Ithaka Journal 2015 would like to thank esteemed alumna Ms. Karishma Attari for her invaluable support and guidance in the development of this year's Creative Writing section.

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A special thanks to Devika Gupta

Editorial

Science fiction, and dystopia, one of its popular sub-genres, have always been an integral part of literature. It is human nature to envisage the marvels and mysteries of an uncertain future, delve into the intricate crevices of the mind, to test the boundaries of invention and achievement, to speculate about the very being of creatures so different from ourselves. Many of these titles take their place among the classics, from Thomas More's iconic *Utopia* to more contemporary works by Ray Bradbury and Isaac Asimov, to the cyberpunk we know today.

There is a sense of foreboding attached to both dystopian literature and sci-fi narratives, a sense of a slowly approaching monster, whether literal or metaphorical. This conditions the reader into expecting either a pessimistic, bleak ending; a warning of sorts, or an optimistic one where the protagonist escapes doom. Irrespective of happy or sad endings for the reader, both genres exhibit the uniquely human quality of predicting what the future will be or what life in alternate universes must be. It is a display of the curiosity about and ability to dream of societies and cultures other than our own. While in sci-fi it manifests itself as comfort or danger provided by futuristic gizmos, in dystopian literature it allows one to critique one's environment by creating another fictional one that mirrors the former's problems. This telescopic authorial vision is greater than the inevitable sense of foreboding.

As students, readers, and human beings, we constantly seek to learn from our myriad experiences. Those who don't study their history are doomed to repeat it; here at the Ithaka Journal, we would like to add, those who do not heed visions of the future are doomed to live through them; as Ray Bradbury remarks, "Science fiction is the most important literature in the history of the world... it's the history of ideas, the history of our civilization birthing itself." After all, isn't looking forward the clearest way to see who we are now?

So, this year, test the very limits of your mind- and you shall find between these covers some imaginative candy, an intellectual treat. Russell Saldanha examines just how fictional "science fiction" is in Wellsian works in "Catching Up With Science," while Kieran Lobo draws stark parallels between classic dystopian narratives to real-world scenarios. Annabel George explores the sub-genre of romance in science fiction in "Paranormal Romance." Sumant Salunke analyses the chilling implications for women in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, as Nayanika Nambiar ably dissects one of sci-fi's most classic horror stories, *Frankenstein*. Next, Saniya Gonsalves espies the pattern of surveillance in well-known dystopic narratives. Vikrant Mehra makes "A Case for the Empires," while Amani Bhobe questions the ethics behind behavioural modification in *A Clockwork Orange* in "The Morality of Free Will." Shalmali Sankpal traces the disturbing descent of humankind envisioned by Thomas Hobbes in post-apocalyptic societies; Chinmayi Pilgaonkar explores the horrifying Huxleyian vision of the future as depicted in *Brave New World*. On a high note, in "A Dystopian Crescendo," Senora Rebello turns dystopic analysis to contemporary music and anime. "Your Species or Mine?" by Malvika Patil applies Marxist theory to the inevitable power struggles between species. Farah Maneckshaw addresses the practice of euthanasia in dystopian worlds, and finally, Meryl Thomas and Ipshita Peters find the touch of humanity in the most inhuman of us all - robots.

This year, we're also pleased to introduce a short Creative Writing section, where Sunaina Menezes, Amruta Khandekar and Sarjan Sheth have penned their own visions of the future: chilling, desolate, but not without a ray of hope.

Look inwards - and experience the supernova of the imagination. What does it mean to be human? This answer is the first step to realizing who we are as a society, and how we want to be remembered as a civilization.

Neerja Deodhar
Raina Bhagat
Editors-in-Chief, Ithaka Journal 2015

Ithaka

As you set out for Ithaka
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope your road is a long one.
May there be many summer mornings when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you enter harbors you're seeing for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to learn and go on learning from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

- C.P. Cavafy

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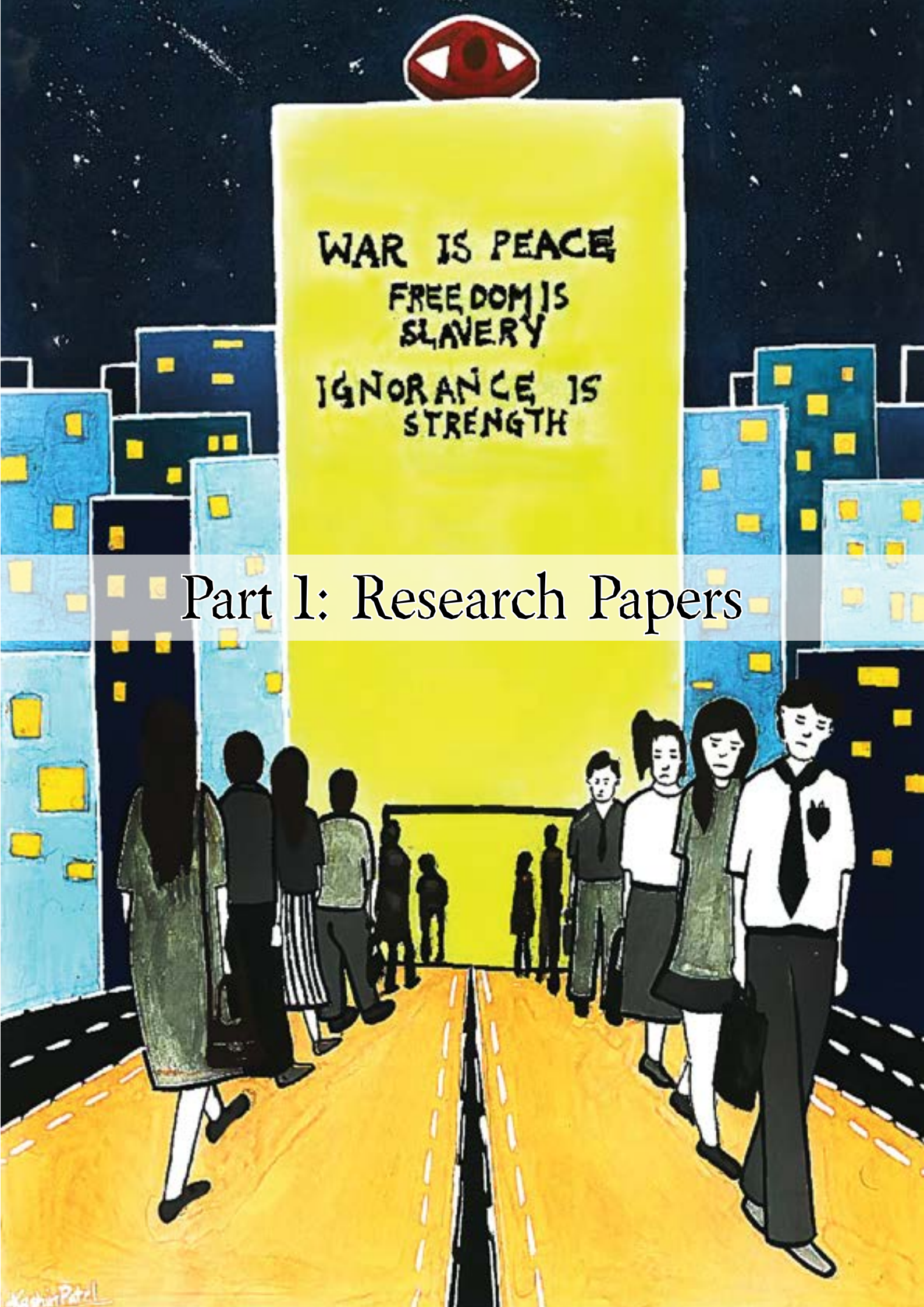

Part 1: Research Papers

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Catching Up With Science

Russell Saldanha • FYBSc

This paper attempts to draw attention to the 'science behind science fiction,' by providing a scientific explanation for the theories explored in novels by the illustrious author H. G. Wells and further discussing their credibility and practicality in the present time.

Science fiction, as a mainstream genre, began gaining worldwide recognition at the advent of 19th century. One of the main pioneers of this genre was Herbert George Wells. His "scientific romances" comprised of stories that were fashioned of fantastical imagination backed by scientific facts, which continue to bewilder readers even today. Wells' novels contain many scientific concepts on which he has built the stories. However, not all concepts are explained in depth and hence, readers may stumble as the plot progresses owing to the inadequate information. Furthermore, do these concepts have scientific credibility in today's age or are they just imaginative narratives of fiction? This paper attempts to provide additional scientific information and the current scientific standing on the themes and concepts presented by the H. G. Wells in his novels, *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The War of Worlds* (1898).

The Time Machine recounts the extraordinary journey of the protagonist (referred to as the Time Traveler), 802,700 years into the future, where he encounters the ethereal Eloi and the subterranean Morlocks – different versions of the evolved man. Wells combined various concepts from different scientific streams (especially physics) using the time machine as "a metaphorical vehicle for exploring the future of the human race" (Ruddick 11) and the "post-Darwinian relationship between mankind and time" (Ruddick 40). This novel was instrumental in popularizing the concept of time travel and helped push time travel from science fiction to legitimate science (Fox and Keck 277).

The main theme of this novel is Time Travel. According to David Lewis, a person travels through time if the difference between its departure and arrival times as measured in the surrounding world is not equal to the personal time of the person during the journey (that is, the time on that person's wrist watch) (145). The common notion that a majority of mankind hold is that time is a constant, an independent variable (Howell). Wells felt differently and had said that time is a fourth dimension of space and that we overlook this because "our consciousness moves along it" (Russell 51). Albert Einstein, in his book *Relativity: The Special and General Theory,* proved that in addition to the three dimension space coordinates that stipulate one with location, there exists a time coordinate which supplies the direction (73). Einstein said that the speed of time increases or decreases depending on your own speed relative to another moving object. Hence, a person travelling in a spaceship at a speed that is just below the speed of light would age at an extremely slow rate compared to that person's twin at home (Howell). This is the very basis with which H. G. Wells justifies time travel: "If it is travelling through time fifty times or a hundred times faster than we are, if it gets through a minute while we get through a second, the impression it creates will of course be only one-fiftieth or one-hundredth of what it would make if it were not travelling in time" (16).

This novel has received a lot of scientific criticism. One critic questions the unexplained working of the time machine: "The machine itself is the vaguest of mechanical assumptions; a thing of ivory, quartz, nickel and brass that quite illogically carries its rider into an existing past or future" (Beresford 16). While Wells mentioned the theory behind travelling forwards in time, he doesn't explain the phenomenon of travelling back in time; he only states the act of doing it – "I clambered

upon the saddle…[and] I came back" (128-129). Many scientists have labelled 'moving backwards' through time as impossible due to its paradoxical nature (most notably, the Grandfather Paradox), (Nahin 43; Hawking). This paradox makes it impossible for the time traveler to go back to his present and he would have to only move ahead in time.

Through *The War of Worlds,* H. G. Wells became the first writer to publish a story on an extra-terrestrial invasion, starting off, according to Mark Hillegas, a 'great Mars boom, when public imbecility and journalistic enterprise combined to flood the papers and society with news from Mars' (Cornlis 24). Wells gave us his perspective on Mars, portraying Martians as a superior race -"Intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic" (5). Though Wells used this book to highlight the vulnerability of Victorian England, he also sought to provide an evolutionary trajectory of humankind (13).

Throughout the book, Wells draws heavily from Darwinism, mainly because he held a positive view of Darwin's theories (4). In fact, he presents his approval of this science when he mentions in the novel, a paper, *"The Past and Present of the Human Race,"* by Thomas Huxley, the champion of Darwinism at that period of time: "It is worthy of remark that a certain speculative writer of quasi-scientific repute … His prophecy, I remember, appeared in November or December, 1893, in a long-defunct publication, the *Pall Mall Budget* (116).

Furthermore, Wells constructs an image for the Martians not only from imagination, but also from Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution. He describes the aliens as "descended from beings not unlike ourselves, by a gradual development of brain and hands (the latter giving rise to the two bunches of delicate tentacles at last) at the expense of the rest of the body… [they] had what appears to have been an auditory organ, a single round drum at the back of the head-body, and eyes with a visual range not very different from ours" (186, 188). Darwin had stated that a species would inevitably change in order to adapt to the changing conditions, wherein the species would evolve in a manner such that the least favourable characteristics for adaptation would give way to features that facilitate the survival of the species (481). Moreover, it is assumed that as technology advances, the intellectual characteristics would dominate, resulting in the enlargement of the brain (Gunn 119).

Another concept that borrowed from Darwin is the "Struggle for Existence," which Wells incorporated in the matter of the red weed. According to Darwin, "[if an] organic being naturally increases at so high a rate, [and is] not destroyed, the earth would soon be covered by the progeny of a single pair" (40). This is the exact behaviour depicted by the red weed, which went on to cover the entire length of the rivers: "At Putney, as I afterwards saw, the bridge was almost lost in a tangle of this weed, and at Richmond, too, the Thames water poured in a broad and shallow stream across the meadows of Hampton and Twickenham. As the water spread the weed followed them, until the ruined villas of the Thames valley were for a time lost in this red swamp" (Wells 212).

The reader observes the deep obsession of Wells with Darwinism. Jonathan Greenberg goes on to state that "Darwinism is the greatest intellectual provocation for Wells's fantasies… indeed, the net cast by Darwinism in the fin de siècle snares multiple social problems – about race, gender, class, sexuality – and Wells fuses questions about the origin of the species with the social concerns of nineteenth-century utopianists [sic]" (613,614). Though most of his novels contain its elements, the

relationship between Wells and Darwinism is best observed here (613).

The Time Machine and *The War of Worlds* highlighted the themes of time travel and alien invasion respectively, but neither of the two themes has become a reality. There have been no time machines invented nor has any form of alien life contacted us. They still remain works of fiction; existing only on paper and not in the real world. However, there have been signs of the imagined future that H. G. Wells intended for the human race. The inequalities between the different social classes of man maintains its worsening state – the rich become richer and the poor become poorer. This is exactly how Wells predicted that the "devolution" of mankind would begin. Furthermore, the recent discovery of the existence of water on Mars hints at the possible alien life there (Zhang). Hence, though the chances of a Martian invasion remains extremely low, it can be a possibility.

The scientific knowledge and facts associated with a novel is what defines science fiction as a genre. Because he had remained forever faithful to this principle, H. G. Wells is critically acclaimed in this stream. The scientific essence is the crux of all his books, giving the readers the opportunity to view it from a scientific angle. His main shortcoming was the inability to provide substantial information of the various processes mentioned. Wells might have provided many theories in his books, but he didn't give thorough explanations for many, thereby making them fictional. However, though a majority of theories mentioned remain impractical, it can be assumed that the rapid developments in science might change this in the future. In the end, what mattered was the fact that his books contained the perfect mix of science and fiction, because of which he is called the "Father of Science Fiction."

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Dystopian Futures

Kieran Lobo • FYBSc

This paper attempts to study the dystopian futures portrayed in popular fiction, and to draw parallels between the imagined structure and reality of such a futuristic society.

Where in the world am I? What in the world is going on? What am I going to do? These are questions common to science fiction whenever and wherever one locates it historically or geographically" (Moylan 1).

Fiction is something imagined, rather than being something derived from events that have actually occurred. One of the most popular sub-genres of Science-Fiction literature is dystopia. Dystopian literature has its roots in utopian literature, when the term utopia came into existence in Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). This paper aims to highlight the dystopian themes portrayed by novels and films and to draw similarities with past, present, and future scenarios.

Chris Ferns defines utopia as "both a good place, and ideal (or at any rate, more perfect) society, yet at the same time one that does not exist – desirable, perhaps, but at the same time unattainable" (Ferns 2). Utopian themes began gaining popularity in the nineteenth century with works such as Alfred D. Cridge's *Utopia, News From Nowhere and Looking Backward.* These books played on the themes of perfect harmony in all sects of society where all resources were being used to their maximum potential. With the advent of the twentieth century, many of these utopian environments portrayed were criticised. According to Chris Ferns, since the nature of utopia is ambiguous it requires the phrase 'anti-utopian' or 'dystopian' for registering and describing the negative existence. A misplaced faith in utopias would eventually lead to ruin.

"Dystopia's foremost truth lies in its ability to reflect upon the causes of social and ecological evil as systemic" (Moylan xii). The concept of dystopian literature is not only to entertain the reader, but to also provide a platform to understand changing scenarios and characteristics of the future.

> "It followed then that when Hitler burned a book I [a lover of libraries] felt it as keenly, please forgive me, as his killing a human, for in the long sum of history they are one and the same flesh. Mind or body, put to the oven, is a sinful practice, and I carried that with me..."
> (Bradbury xi).

Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) envisions a future where books are being made obsolete by declaring them illegal as a form of censorship. Books found were immediately burnt by firemen, whose roles were to start fires, rather than put them out. By burning books, the firemen promoted ignorance and nullified the uniqueness of thought amongst individuals. The prohibition of books, however, was merely a by-product in the search of a Utopia; it was thought that the only way to stop wars and establish peace was to nullify a person's ability to think for himself and books were seen as the most thought-provoking media in existence.

"In 1933, The students, along with brown-shirted storm troopers, tossed heaps of books into a bonfire while giving the Hitler arm-salute and singing Nazi anthems" (Historyplace.com). All books that did not propagate Nazi ideology were burnt. Hitler considered the burning of books to be a 'cleansing' in order to keep German culture 'intact' and 'pure'. The book burnings were meant to systematically turn the Germans towards violence as a form of salvation. As Bradbury pointed out, books encourage thought and could dissuade the youth against Nazi ideals. This episode in *Fahrenheit 451* is comparable to Salman Rushdie's attempt to challenge the boundaries of freedom of

expression with his novel *The Satanic Verses*. Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini called for his execution and placed a bounty on his head. Rushdie's underground publisher in Tehran as well as his Japanese translator were both murdered by extremists as part of the fatwa on Rushdie. Bradbury also speaks of the obliteration of religion in the future, when Montag, the protagonist, rips out the pages of one of the last surviving Bibles.

In England in 1961, Anthony Burgess began to take note of an emerging trend of violence, drugs, and consumption of alcohol amongst the youth. Intrigued by the sociological developments, he used the changing environment around him as inspiration for his novel *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). The story follows Alex, a teenager in a world where excessive violence, sexual aggression and drugs aren't considered as out of the ordinary. In the book, Burgess imagined a future which was a “totalitarian nightmare” and “liberalism gone mad” (Manchester). He wished to express, as much as possible, the low moral standards prevalent. Burgess speaks about violence as a form of cure through the Ludovico Technique. Violence is used not entirely to cure violence, but to make the recipient repulsed by it (Manchester). Even the gang violence in the book can be credited to a moment in his life when his first wife was robbed and beaten up by a group of American soldiers in 1944 (Manchester).

"If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face - forever" (Orwell 215). George Orwell's fear of a totalitarian state has been well documented in his dystopian novel *1984* (1949). Aldous Huxley notes that *1984* “was a magnified projection into the future of a present that contained Stalinism and a past that had witnessed the flowering of Nazism” (Huxley I). The events of *1984* take place after a nuclear war, and the novel plays on the underlying theme that the government actually constructs a dystopian environment while in search of a utopia. The society portrayed in 1984 is one that is ruled entirely by punishment and the fear of punishment. The book speaks of The Thought Police and Vaporisation. The thoughts of citizens are regulated and those who think of thoughts against the political system are vaporised. Nobody knows where the vaporised people go, with their information being wiped from databases, as though they didn't exist. Fear of the Thought Police and the scientific weapons at their disposal, the citizens' political thoughts are stymied to have only one positive thought towards the government. The controlled society achieved in *1984* is one of systematic and desirable behaviour, which is obtained by both violent and non-violent means of manipulation.

With the use of cameras to capture the movements of every citizen, Orwell portrayed the misuse of technology at a time when the idea of electronic surveillance was barely comprehensible. The effect of technology in the book is so mind-controlling that the protagonist actually changes his political thought towards the end of the book and supports the methods of the government. This novel is a great example on the commanding effects technology has on humans and the vast amount of power it puts into the hands of its possessor and controller.

When writing *Brave New World* (1931), Aldous Huxley used the problem of overpopulation as one of the inspirations for his book. In the future, the world population is kept constant at a particular number (around two billion) which is determined by the size of the population to the natural resources available. The reality; however, bears a stark difference: Over seventy-five years have passed since *Brave New World* was

published, and yet, the exponential growth of the world population is a major concern. Huxley aptly stated that “the coming time will not be The Space Age, it will be The Age of Overpopulation” (Huxley 10). It was Huxley's view that the increasing numbers would lead to economic unrest as there would be fewer goods available per person. Even in under-developed countries, a fall in death rate due to technological advancements had not led to a corresponding fall in birth rate. He believed that in order to curb the problem of increasing population, economically unstable and under-developed countries would come under some form of totalitarian government, most probably by the Communist Party (Huxley 14).

In *Brave New World*, utopia is achieved only when humans are conditioned to be satisfied with their lives. Babies are synthetically developed to fulfil a pre-defined role in society, and are induced to be content within it. Freedom of thought is scorned upon as it goes against what every human being is conditioned to believe from a very young age. Even emotions such as jealousy, hatred, love and many others are done away with to create the perfect environment. In *Brave New World,* perfection is achieved through the sacrifice of human sacrificing uniqueness and the pledging of lives to undertake pre-destined roles in society.

The foundations of a dystopian future have already been laid. If left unchecked, climate change will increase the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible disasters for people and ecosystems (UN and Climate Change). Global warming is arguably one of direst threats that the world currently faces. In Kevin Reynolds' 1995 post-apocalyptic film *Waterworld*, he explores a world set two hundred years into the future where the polar icecaps have melted, submerging most of the earth and creating a single, giant ocean. George Miller touches upon depleting energy resources in the *Mad Max* franchise. The films are set in future Australia and follow the life of ex-cop Max Rockatansky in a world that is degrading due to war and depletion of energy resources. Through the films, Miller depicts his version of civilization after the 'Oil Age', where separate factions emerge to control the last remaining resources of oil.

The world around us is changing, and often in a deleterious manner. Society is becoming increasingly intolerable and regressive, women are constantly challenging cultural norms but gender equality still remains an alien concept in many countries, and freedom of expression is a concept that that isn't respected in many liberal countries. Humans are plagued with the unremitting dormant threat of nuclear war and with unrest in various parts of the world leading to the loss of millions of lives; utopian ideals have been lost a long time ago.

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Paranormal Love

Annabel George • TYBA

The timelessness of romance often heightens the potency of the dire circumstances of a dystopian tale. This paper explores three dystopian romances and determine the extent to which the external forces of fate and circumstance define their personal relationships.

A common outsider's view on science fiction is that it's afraid of emotion, especially if the emotion is romantic and/or sexual" (Ward). Cynthia Ward, in this article highlights the sub-genre of Romance within Sci-Fi. She goes on to say, "It's not hard to see where this cliché comes from when you read a hard-SF story in which the characters exist only to invent a gizmo or decipher a Big Dumb Object, or when you watch *Star Wars: Episode II: Attack of the Clones* and hear the worst romantic lines ever penned" (Ward). Ward continues to say that despite Science Fiction's age old reputation of excluding emotion and giving more importance to reason, romance has been a part of it from the very beginning. For example, H.G. Wells' first novel, *The Time Machine: An Invention* (1898) focuses on the relationship between a time traveler and the female protagonist named Weena (Ward, "Paranormal Romance"). Science enhances the storyline and helps carry the plot forward, setting it apart from other stories. However, the element of 'romance' acts as a sub-genre in this genre. This paper will be focusing on this element of 'romance' in the works *The Time Traveler's Wife* (2003), *The Age of Adaline* (2015) and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004).

The Time Traveler's Wife by Audrey Niffenegger centers on the relationship between Henry DeTamble and Clare Abshire and how 'time travel', on which the book is based entirely, more often than not becomes a force which tests their relationship. Audrey Niffenegger, "…patiently and carefully guides the reader through the tangled narrative." according to David Abrams in his review of the book ("Review: The Time Traveler's Wife"). DeTamble has a rare genetic disorder called Chrono-Impairment which results in him traveling back and forth in time; thus giving him the opportunity to visit various episodes in his life (both past and present) which at times forces him to relive episodes of his life which are a too painful, for example when he witnesses his mother's death innumerable times. Clare Abshire, the woman he falls in love with, has known him ever since she was six years old and has loved him for most of her life. The two of them are often faced with fears of losing what they have or things ending differently with them, in spite of them knowing that they're going to end up together and spend the rest of their lives together:

> "Clare: Henry has been gone since eight o'clock yesterday morning and I am beginning to be afraid. What if I go into labor and he's not here? What if I have the baby and he still isn't back? What if he's hurt? What if he's dead?"
> (Niffenegger 377).

This fear results from Henry's time traveling. In an interview with the author herself, Audrey has been quoted as saying, "This intensity of absence seemed implicit in the idea of a time traveler's wife, someone who had to live with uncertainty and worry until the time traveler returned safe and sound, again and again." (546) Audrey points out that although time travel is a force which brings the characters together, it is also a "malevolent thing which wrecks them" (546). 'Time Travel' therefore results in the unpredictability of their relationship. But what cannot be denied is the fact that in spite of this, Clare chooses to stay rather than to put an end to the relationship because of her love for Henry. In the chapter 'After the end', Henry voices out how he fears Clare will "leave" him due to his "undependableness",

to which she says,"I won't ever leave you, even though you're always leaving me" (Niffenegger 105).

This decision to stay or simply waiting is quite similar to the characters in the movie *The Age of Adaline,* directed by Lee Toland Krieger. Adaline Bowman, the female protagonist in the movie meets Ellis Jones at a New Year's Eve party and he instantly falls in love with her. In the past, she has always stopped herself from falling in love with anyone and letting them fall in love with her or anyone getting close to her because she is always on the run; this is the reason why she is afraid of hurting Ellis and herself as well. Eventually she gives in and they begin a relationship. After Adaline meets with an accident, she reveals to Ellis that she was born in 1908 and that she has lived for 107 years; on a car ride to her parent's cabin one night, she became victim to an accident due to the tough road conditions resulting from the incomprehensible snowfall that particular night and diverged into a ravine and died in the icy waters. A stroke of lightening brought her back to life, but caused her to stop aging which is why she must live her life on the run. Ellis chooses to love her and continues being in a relationship with her in spite of this truth.

Memories of the people who still live or who once existed remain eternal in the human mind. Memories can be powerful, in the sense that they act as a stimulus to either hurt or make someone feel happy. The movie *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* focuses on how far an individual will go to do anything possible to extinguish memories of the people they want out of their lives. Roger Ebert in his review of the movie talks about the power of memories: "But the funny thing about love is, it can survive the circumstances of its ending; we remember good times better than bad ones…" ("Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind Movie Review"). *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* is a story of two people, namely Joel Barish and Clementine Kruczynski, who possess polar opposite personalities, and meet on a train from Montauk, New York. However, they were former lovers of two years and they're unaware of this. After their affair ends badly, Clementine decides to hire the New York City firm Lacuna, Inc. to erase all her memories of their relationship through a 'scientific procedure' (Ebert) i.e. through the use of the Lacuna machine. When he discovers this, Joel decides to go through the same procedure. The minor characters in the movie i.e. Doctor Howard Mierzwiak (the doctor) Mary Svevo (the receptionist) and Stan Fink (the memory erasing technician), are characters who have complicated pasts and interwoven relationships too; especially the Doctor and Mary. Their past comes to light in the later part of the film, revealing a brief relationship the Doctor and Mary once shared, after which Mary undergoes the same procedure for the same purpose as Clementine and Joel. The 'lacuna machine' is the most vital part of the movie. It is with the help of this machine that the characters are able to erase the memories of each other. *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* is a 'break-up movie' (Mansfield, "Ten years of Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind") which focuses on how the characters show an urgency in escaping from a hurtful past and the 'lacuna machine' is a means through which the characters are able to achieve this.

Both *The Time Traveller's Wife* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* talk about love through the use or presence of 'scientific' elements, but the manner in which the two texts portray love is quite different. However critic Roger Ebert is of the opinion that *Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind*, keeping aside the fact that it is a breakup movie, "has an emotional center, and that's what makes it work."(Ebert) He continues to say

that, “Although Joel and Clementine Ping-Pong through various stages of romance and reality, what remains constant is the human need for love and companionship, and the human compulsion to keep seeking it, despite all odds.” (Ebert). Natasha Walter in her review on the book *The Time Traveller's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger points out that, “Take away the time travel, and you have a writer reminiscent of Anne Tyler and Carol Shields, who captures the rhythms of intimacy, who burrows into the particularities of family life” (Walter); The bonds the characters share in both the novels are familiar and relatable even though the stories these characters are part of have different elements of Science which makes them different from each other.

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Of Feminism, Revolutions and Revelations

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This paper highlights the hyper-patriarchal nature of the totalitarian and theocratic Gileadean society enshrined in Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale while commenting on the Second-Wave Feminism, and the role of women in female disfranchisement.

From a distance, it looks like peace.

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* has been subject to intense scrutiny under a multitude of lenses tinted by the principles of theology, psychology, and feminism. Published in 1986, the novel is an indelible mark on the rich cultural tapestry of dystopian literature, painting a grim picture of the Republic of Gilead, a totalitarian state ruling the United States following a coup to restore the morally dead society to its traditions and Biblical roots.

Mimesis[1] is a theory that propounds the idea: 'Art imitates Life.' Literature is charged with the duty of capturing reality within pages and ink, and that it can be a mirror and therefore a harbinger of change is an idea widely acknowledged. Dystopian, and other forms of speculative literature, are charged with a unique duty, to magnify and capture current social trends and take them to logical extremes to bring forth a realization of a very plausible future. These shades of excess neither create fantasies nor represent a warped reality, but merely carry it forward to its edges without brakes, creating an alternate reality for the readers. Thus, at the heart of *The Handmaid's Tale* lies the social debate about the nature of freedom given to citizens, especially women, and who ultimately controls these freedoms.

In the micro-compartmentalized and segregated society of Gilead, each woman falls in a prescribed caste. The Handmaids, women still capable of childbirth, are a paradoxically reviled and revered. Assigned to men holding positions of power, they are merely "a two legged womb," "an ambulatory chalice" and "sacred vessels" (Atwood 146) whose function is to give birth to a healthy baby by partaking in a Ceremony, in which the Commander has sexual intercourse with the passive Handmaid in the presence of his Wife. Similarly, the Wives are women married to Commanders holding the illusion of power within the household, while the Marthas are maids. State-sponsored prostitutes, present because "Nature demands variety, for men," (Atwood 249) are in a secret cult named after the Harlot Queen of Israel, Jezebel. Sitting atop the rickety pyramid of power are the Aunts, an elite sect of women who staunchly support the ideals of Gilead, charged with the task of brainwashing the Handmaids by methods of abuse, torture and humiliation.

The protagonist in *The Handmaid's Tale*, Offred (literally Of Fred) is a mirror to reflect the society around her. She is almost like a detached spectator, sleepwalking through the abuse and torment she suffers. Through her, Atwood shows the reductive and dehumanizing nature of Gilead's principles. Offred becomes a carrier of Atwood's ideologies, mirroring her separation from radical movements. Her very name, a pun on 'afraid,' is stolen by Gilead, showing the patriarchal disposition to strip a woman of her individual identity and bestow upon her one related to a man. This situation illustrates Simone de Beauvoir's view in her novel, *The Second Sex,* where she states "For him, she is sex – absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not with reference to her; she is the incidental, as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute- she is the Other" (de Beauvoir xvi). Stealing a woman's autonomy and identity, and labelling her according to the name of her Commander demonstrates the psychological warfare launched by the Gileadean government to ensure the recreation of an empty woman.

Offred's ruminations about her past in the free world, and of her time in the Red

Centre juxtaposed with her present reality portrays a stark image of women caught in the crossfire of changing roles forced upon them. The foggy memories of her daughter and husband form a backbone of nostalgia prevalent throughout the book, while the tortured echoes of the Red Centre paint a chilling picture of systematic brainwashing of women. In the Red Centre, or the Rachel and Leah Re-Education Centre, the Aunts discipline women who participated in non-traditional relationships (second marriages, as was the case of Offred, or lesbian relationships, as was the case with Moira) before the coup (Atwood 304). The Red Centre was a part of Atwood's commentary on women fighting against feminism, wherein the 'trainees' are introduced to the faux-matriarchal structure within Gilead, which is a result of internalized misogyny and sexism. The Aunts are warriors of patriarchy, used by the authoritarian state to domesticate and subjugate the Handmaids to help them accept their inevitable fate. Through usage of torture, both mental- by showing them gory pornographic material, and humiliation; and physical- by beating them with cattle prods, the Aunts pose as motherly messiahs restoring a society's dead morality. Atwood's stark irony particularly shines through this insidious caste of women, who claim that they are "aiming for a spirit of camaraderie among women" (Atwood 234). They claim that the caste system is a means of liberating women, narrowing the scope of their work to save their energies. This talk of solidarity is richly ironic, considering that one popular 're-education' tactic used by the Aunts is shaming and isolating rape victims to normalise rapacious behaviour.

The Aunts are Atwood's chosen vehicles for showing the perfidious nature of women oppressing other women under the guise of morality and gender equality. In conversation with a fellow writer, Victor-Lévy Beaulieu, Atwood compares them to the British rule in India, wherein colonisers created armies of Indians to control other Indians (Atwood and Beaulieu 78). Similarly, women could best be controlled by other women themselves. However, the role of the Aunts is a double-edged sword that Atwood wields, and they also carry with them her misgivings and frustrations with the Second Wave of Feminism, a movement pioneered by women like Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan that originated in the 1960s (40 years after the First Wave of Feminism[2]) (Rampton).

The Second-Wave Feminists believed that aspects of social life are inherently sexist, and that misogyny exists in society that leads to subconsciously held sexist beliefs. They tackled ingrained and implicit inequalities and patriarchy. While the Second Wave of Feminism signalled a change in the perception of women, it had one gaping flaw. It portrayed the average woman as a middle-class, white and suburban woman, diluting the experiences of women of colour, economically backward women and non-cishet[3] women (Rampton). In short, the Second Wave of Feminism completely disregarded the idea of intersectionality, that not all women face the same discrimination, and experiences of discrimination of the marginalized groups within a marginalized sex differed from an average white woman's. Angered by this disenfranchisement, narrow and sub-group specific movements like Cultural Feminism, Separatism, and Lesbian Feminism emerged. This created a rift between feminists, causing the movement to become fragmentized and compartmentalized. As each group furthered a faceted view of feminism, it resulted in a non-collaborative movement that ran on parallel and often conflicting tracks (Callaway 17). Atwood was disenchanted with this view of feminism, and created the

world of Gilead to reflect its shortcomings. Through it, Atwood sends across a clear message: that a movement scattered in its ideological roots would lead only to scattered action, ushering in exclusive and narrow change.

The repression and magnification of women's sexuality was a pillar of the Second Wave of Feminism. Through the protagonist, Offred, the castes of the Handmaids and the Jezebels, Atwood targets the Madonna-Whore dichotomy prevalent in the society. The Handmaids are revered as 'Holy Chalices,' paragons of purity, and yet are hated by the Wives, the Econowives and even the Marthas. On the other hand, the puritanical state of Gilead hides the government-affiliated Jezebels. Offred's repressed sexuality and social conditioning is investigated in the book, where Japanese tourists' shorts shock her sensibilities, but at the same time, she enjoys being seen as an object of desire by the males around her. Moira, a lesbian Jezebel who is forced into entertaining men, offers a different standpoint, showing how sexuality is not only repressed or glorified to the point of caricature, but also controlled by the society.

Sexuality and speech are two pathways through which Atwood highlights agency and choice. Free speech, especially among women is forbidden, with the fear of surveillance ("the Eyes") controlling every conversation. This is akin to George Orwell's *1984*, where the fear of Big Brother is a defining characteristic of the novel. Serena Joy, the Commander's wife who makes speeches for women to be servile and helped in the formation of Gilead is a woman stuck in the world she envisioned, robbed of her job as she "doesn't make speeches anymore; she has become speechless" (Atwood 46). Offred's silence and repressed words, and her yearning for communication come to a forefront when she reads words scratched on the bottom of her closet and established a connection with a dead woman. The usage of particular words like 'Mayday' to symbolise an underground revolution is similar to the creation of the Mockingjay in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy. This restraint and control over speech in Gilead is characteristic of a society dying from lack of a choice.

Through these women, Atwood paints a picture of a society where agency is denied to women, where their choices and the ability to choose are controlled by men, and where there remains a blurry distinction between dark and light. Atwood wrote, “The Republic of Gilead has no bounds. Gilead is within you." She urges readers to recognise problematic beliefs they hold, to purge them and cleanse the mind, and to cast the Gilead within us away to allow free thought and make a pathway for acceptance and choice.

> "*Nolite te bastardes carborundorum*
> Don't let the bastards grind you down” (196).

Notes

1. Mimesis is a theory propounded by Plato that states that all forms of art are imitations or representations of reality, nature and life. A central idea to realism, mimesis was researched upon by multiple thinkers like Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Sigmund Freud and Erich Auerbach (Soni and Thakur).

2. First-Wave feminism focused primarily on women's suffrage and *de jure* inequalities. It was pioneered by thinkers like Simone de Beauvoir, rooted in late 19th and early 20th century.

3. Cishet refers to a person who identifies as both cisgender and heterosexual (Rampton).

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Frankenstein: A 21st-Century Autopsy

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This paper attempts to explore Mary Shelley's Frankenstein as the first greatest work of Science fiction and a landmark work of gothic Romantic literature in the light of the Industrial Revolution.

In Mary Shelley's introduction to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*, she writes, "Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things: perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together and endued with vital warmth" (Shelley 45). Science fiction (and also the steam engine) owe their origins to Erasmus Darwin and his experimentation with electrotherapy in the 1800s. The creation of the steam engine and the rise of the chemical industry in Britain marked the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. As a result of this, Romanticism emerged as the literary and artistic movement that served as a backlash to the scientific, empirical, and rational vigour brought about by the Industrial Revolution[1] (Smith). It was characterized by a marked departure from the ideas and techniques of the literary period that preceded it, which was more scientific and rational in nature.

Romantic poetry and prose, by contrast, were intended to express a new and visionary relationship to the imagination, and Romantic poets continually sought to capture and represent the sublime moment and experience (Fite 17). Factories and cities started eroding man's spiritual ties with nature and the natural order of things, while science began to test the boundaries of human inquiry. In this Age of Experimentation, mechanization, and the paradigm shift from intuition to cold and clinical rationalism, nothing seemed impossible. Where Romantic poets like William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge wrote transcendental poetry concerning nature and its dualism, Mary Shelley wrote about nature in the most visceral sense of the word – a *human* sense of awe, horror, apprehension, and terror. Some critics claim that *Frankenstein's* gothic ethos "initiates a rethinking of romantic rhetoric" (Guyer 77). Shelley's engaging and simultaneously challenge of the typical romantic tropes achieve this rethinking. She dreamt of a monster created in a passionate attempt to test the limits of the natural sciences. Victor Frankenstein, in his attempt to create 'something from nothing' is unmindful of compassion, family, or friends in his profane and possibly blasphemous endeavour echoing a Faustian bargain[2]. Frankenstein's creation, once brought to life, recalls a primal fear of all that is unholy, a monstrous malevolence that should not have been.

In short, the argument can be made that through *Frankenstein*, Shelley not only engages with Romanticism, she exceeds much of what her contemporaries were writing by taking the movement one step further (Smith). This paper attempts to explore Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as the first greatest work of Science Fiction and a landmark work of gothic Romantic literature in the light of the Industrial Revolution.

With such advancements in the field of alchemy and natural sciences, there was widespread apprehension towards the limits of science, and fears around the prevailing idea that mechanization could overtake human nature and what it means to be human (Smolka 28). Frankenstein's creature personifies that uncomfortable change-crystallized in the form of a monster of our own creation, a curse that is brought by taking science too far. In an era of logic and enlightenment, literature took a turn to more grotesque and murky themes, in the spirit of Romanticism. Since the Industrial Revolution devalued the individual human spirit, unchartered territories of imagination and intense mental conflict showed the

traditional Romantic involvement with the individual, even if it explored his darker emotions and the impulses that lurk outside the safeguards of morals and conscience.

However, several alternate interpretations of the text exist, some directly contradicting the Romantic pathos. Critics have argued that Mary Shelley meant *Frankenstein* to be a critique of the popular Romantic ideology. Percy Shelley and Byron, the traditional Romantic poets she was acquainted with at the time were not known to be of sound moral integrity (Legacy.owensboro.kctcs.edu). Therefore, she felt that 'free love,' 'intellectual creativity,' and radical self-involvement did not always lead to the best results. She believed that following abstract Romantic ideals came at a dangerous price - even in the name of innovation and glory. Victor's creation eventually driving him to his own death exemplifies this doomed quest. He says to Sir Walton, the Arctic seafarer who encounters a dying Victor, "You seek for knowledge and wisdom, as I once did; and I ardently hope that the gratification of your wishes may not be a serpent to sting you, as mine has been," (Shelley 64) in warning, forcing Walter to rethink his quest for unknown lands.

Setting aside Romantic themes, a feminist interpretation reveals some troubling aspects of Victor's personality. His creation of the monster leads to the death of several female characters. His point of view leaves no dialogue for women in the story either. "The women in Frankenstein are alarmingly domestic, absolutely selfless, and ultimately, utterly useless—and Mary Shelley's portrayal of them is purposeful" (Dwyer 10). Moreover, when the monster asks him to create a mate for him, he says, "She might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate and delight, for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness" (Shelley 206). He then proceeds to destroy her. In similar attempts to 'play God' Victor attempts to create life without the involvement of a female, which showcases the dangers of cheating Nature, and more specifically, of fearing and trying to suppress women. According to Barbara Johnson, an American literary critic and translator, it is "the story of a man who usurps the female role by physically giving birth to a child" (151). Nature, referred to as a female, is constantly violated by Victor's actions as he attempts to rewrite her laws.

An autobiographical reading of the novel uncovers Mary's own experiences with birth. Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley's mother (also known for her feminist theory) died while giving birth to her. Additionally, Mary and Percy Shelley's child died a few weeks after her birth. In her journal, Mary wrote, "I had a dream that my little baby came to life again, that it had only been cold and that we rubbed it before the fire and it lived" (Mellor 32). The idea of rebirth had taken root much before the dialogue on Luigi Galvani's macabre experiments on electricity and the reanimation of corpses. However, the problem of Intentional Fallacy arises when a book is read solely from the filter of what we think the author *might have* wanted to convey thereby neglecting several larger socio-cultural and historical implications[3].

Frankenstein makes strong statements about the life of the author and the causes that she valued. However, its commentary on science poses some tough but relevant questions to a race that is constantly evolving. Following Mary Shelley's magnum opus, some later Romantic works followed Erasmus Darwin's dictum of 'enlisting the imagination under the banner of science.' H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man* also dealt with "the individual's desires to transgress human boundaries in the name of science" (Sirabian). Following this 'mad scientist' trope, the likes of Mr. Hyde in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and*

Mr. Hyde poses "a question appropriate to an age of imperial decline: [of] how much can one lose – individually, socially, nationally – and still remain a man" (Punter 239-240). It questioned whether the current theory of evolution was progressive, or whether it came at the cost of humanity. Conversely, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* uses science as a safeguard against superstition by functioning as an instrument for human aid, thereby proving that "scientific progress can constitute a friend as well as a foe and that the direction is decided by the human factor" (Jacobsson 4). Ultimately, Frankenstein is a story about choice, as seen in the parallels it draws between John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Victor Frankenstein sells his soul to the devil, in a manner of speaking, and emulates God to create his 'Adam,' who eventually rebels against the injustice of his maker. This theme is so popular that it appears even in Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and Isaac Asimov used the term 'Frankenstein Complex' in an essay to describe the 'the fear of man broaching, through technology, into God's realm and being unable to control his own creations' (McCauley 10).

The central question pioneered in this genre of literature usually concerns science and how it affects our humanity. Today, abiogenesis, cloning, stem cell therapy, and genetic modification are the modern take on monsters, corpses, robots, and homunculi. Though subjects of many a scientist's passion, scientific power always comes with ethical consideration. This text, and its sci-fi progeny, reflect a considerable amount of our fears about experimentation and where it falls on the ethical and moral scales of the social order.

In this verse from Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound,* the key idea of responsibility of action in *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus* is well elucidated. Both Mary and Percy Bysshe Shelley were heavily influenced by Greek mythology, and the tale of Prometheus is significant in *Frankenstein*, warning of the consequences of extreme and total power.

> To us it seems that Hermes' speech is to the point.
> What he commands to you is to relax from your
> self-will and seek the wisdom that's in good advice.
> Do as he says, since wrong is shameful in the wise (36).

Notes

1. Romanticism is loosely identified as spanning the years of 1783-1830. It can be distinguished from the preceding period called the Enlightenment by the elevation of the spirit, soul, instinct, and emotion, as opposed to a cool, detached scientific approach to most human endeavors and dilemmas. Romantic literature was a rejection of many of the values movements such as the Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution held as paramount (Smith).

2. Faustian legend originates from Faust, the protagonist of a classic German legend. He is a scholar who is highly successful yet dissatisfied with his life, which leads him to make a pact with the Devil, exchanging his soul for unlimited knowledge and worldly pleasures. A 'Faustian bargain' is a temptation motif from this German folklore ("Faustian Bargain").

3. Intentional Fallacy is a term used in 20th-century literary criticism to describe the problem inherent in trying to judge a work of art by assuming the intent or purpose of the artist who created it (Sutton and Foster 248).

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Eye of the Beholder

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This paper attempts to explore and analyse the use of dehumanization and surveillance and its impact on people in dystopian literature, primarily in George Orwell's futuristic novel, 1984.

Big Brother, newspeak, soma, cyberspace, vaporize, speak-write -- these are all familiar words, thanks to the wide range of dystopian literature. The terms and ideas emerging from dystopian texts have pervaded modern culture and helped in many ways to define it. Dystopian literature is mainly used by authors to highlight the sinister aspects of present times, but in a futuristic setting. Surveillance and a dehumanized state of citizens are common features of most dystopian texts. This research paper aims to analyze these very aspects in George Orwell's *1984* (1949), Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932)*;* Zamiatin's *WE* (1921), and *The Giver* (2014).

The totalitarian authority mentioned in most dystopian texts keeps a constant watch over its citizens with the help of telescreens, hovercrafts, drones, artificial intelligence. In *1984*, surveillance pervades. Michael Yeo divides surveillance into two main categories: Panoptical and surreptitious, in his paper, "Propaganda and Surveillance in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four: Two Sides of the Same Coin." Panoptical surveillance is interiorized self-surveillance. The term "Panopticon" was used by Jeremy Bentham to describe a building in which a single inspector could monitor many occupants from a single point. In the belief that they were being watched over, occupants would avoid punishable behavior. For this, it is not necessary that occupants actually are under surveillance at any given time; only that "the persons to be inspected should always feel themselves as if under inspection, at least as standing a great chance of being so" (Bentham 43). Bentham calls this "the inspection principle" (94). Panoptical surveillance in *1984* is expressed in the following passage: "There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment...You had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and except in darkness, every movement scrutinized" (Orwell 5). In this assumption, Winston self-censors and plays for the telescreen, pretending to believe and think what he is supposed to and hiding his true thoughts and beliefs. The telescreens serve as the 'eyes' of the party, justifying the statement "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU" (Orwell 4), with which the citizens are constantly bombarded. The citizens are also monitored while they are asleep.

Panopticism is also seen in Eugene Zamiatin's *We*. The One State is a city-state entirely cut off from the natural world by a glass Green Wall. Like the Green Wall, all of the structures within the city are made of glass. This enables the authorities to watch over the citizens (Zamiatin 32). Apart from panoptical surveillance, another medium as depicted in *1984* is the patrolling police who checks on people's activities- "In a far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant… It was the patrol police, snooping into people's windows" (Orwell 4).

Though Bentham's theory was restricted to overt acts only, Orwell states that crime extends from action and speech to thought itself -- "thought-crime": "It was terribly dangerous to let your thoughts wander when you were in any public place or within the range of a telescreens, since the smallest things could give you away" (Orwell 79). Winston is shown to dread the thought-police the most - "There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment…plugged

in on any individual wire was a guesswork" (Orwell 5). In total panopticism, it is prudent to avoid not just the signs of unorthodox thought but unorthodox thought itself, to the extent it is possible to prevent one's mind from wandering (Yeo 54). Surreptitious surveillance works not to prevent speech or action, but to detect what people really think or believe by monitoring their speech and action when they are disinhibited in the (illusory) belief that they are in a private setting. Thus it works, and this can only work if the person being monitored has a belief opposite to the one necessary for panoptic surveillance. When Winston believes he is in range of a telescreen, he disguises his beliefs and thoughts by putting on an orthodox face, and even tries to avoid unorthodox thoughts, constantly reminded that surveillance is ubiquitous. When he believes that he is not in range of a telescreen, he is disinhibited and acts freely (Yeo 54-55). He acts as if his actions are private and reveals himself without inhibition, thus allowing spies to detect what he is really thinking. He believes his diary is private and, believing that, allows himself to express his true thoughts in it. He's also mistaken when he believes the room he rents with Julia is private, where he allows himself to express his true desires and thoughts (Orwell 282).

Thus the constant surveillance causes the citizens to live in constant fear and refrains them from expressing their thoughts, emotions and desires, restricting their freedom and individualism. This causes them to live in dehumanized circumstances, which is the second aspect of this paper.

The authorities regulate the lives of the citizens to an inhuman extent, controlling most elements of the individual's existence, everything from the daily routine to the family unit to their career, like a parent taking decisions for the child. Interestingly, the authority is often given familial names like, Big Brother, Father, Uncle, or The Elders. One dehumanizing trait seen in dystopian literature is uniformity among the citizens. In *1984*, citizens are forced to wear uniforms and their identity tag before going out. This contributes to the impression of "sameness" which is vital to collectivism. However, the dehumanized traits aren't always forced on the people. Sometimes the people are "created" that way. In *Brave New World*, the Deltas are conditioned to hate books and flowers. This is done for the convenience of the authorities (Huxley 17). It is also seen that the State interferes with the familial relationships of the individuals, as is observed in *1984*, where children are taught to spy on their parents and report their behavior to the thought police (Orwell 295). Emotional and sexual relationships aren't allowed by the party. This is why Winston and Julia feel they are rebelling against the party by being together (Orwell 278-279). Similarly, in *The Giver*, citizens lack information of love, fear, sadness, etc. simply because they are created that way and their daily dose of injections takes away their memories and emotions. This is supported by their limited vocabulary, wherein they don't have words to describe certain emotions, hence when Jonas becomes the receiver of memories and learns about "love" and asks his parents if they love him, they are unable to understand and he is asked to observe "precision of language". This lack of emotions causes the people to consider even acts of 'killing' or 'vaporizing' normal. Hence, Jonas' mother, who is a doctor, or his father, who works at a Nurturing Centre, do not consider it wrong to vaporize an old person or an undeveloped baby (*The Giver*). In *1984*, this dehumanized behavior due to lack of emotions is born of a fear of the Party. The citizens behave in such a manner because of the constant

surveillance and eventually get used to it. Though against the ways of the Party, Winston's behavior is similarly unfeeling, demonstrated when “He kick[s] the thing into the Gutter,” (Orwell 107) despite the fact that this thing, a human hand, had been severed a by the rocket bomb. Kicking a hand into the gutter, considering it to be just an “it” cannot be deemed humane. Yet he notes in his diary that, at the movies, when a man is killed, he sees the “audience shouting with laughter as he sank” (Orwell 11). The authorities also control the language of the people. The Party introduces a new language called “Newspeak” to make thought crimes impossible. It shrinks the language, applying words to various situations. For instance, the word ‘doublethink’ means believing two contradictory thoughts to be simultaneously true. (Orwell 34) Also the party condemns the word ‘ownlife’, Newspeak for near-heretical individuality and eccentricity, enforcing orthodoxy for all members (Orwell 104).

Though Winston tries to oppose the oppression, this does not bring out his humanity, he and Julia agree that to defeat the party they are willing to lie, steal, forge, murder……throw vitriol in a child’s face (Orwell 340). After Winston is tortured in the Ministry of Love, Obrien states that, “Never again will you be capable of love, of friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity” (Orwell 323). Winston loses his remaining shred of humanity when he is terrified of the punishment of a room full of rats in Room 101, and repeatedly screams, “Do it to Julia” (Orwell 362). Thus the party dehumanizes the citizens through its propaganda, surveillance or through force.

Surveillance and dehumanized behavior often go hand-in-hand; this is seen across most dystopian novels. The authorities regulate dehumanized behavior of the citizens through various means of surveillance. Sometimes the dehumanized behavior is ingrained in the citizens by programming their minds, sometimes it is forced upon them or conditioned. This use of technology can make the setting a utopian one if used correctly. However, its use to monitor the activities of citizens creates the constant feeling of being watched, preventing them from doing anything against the prescribed norms, thus transforming it into a dystopian setting. Thus, surveillance plays a part in bringing about a dehumanized atmosphere among the people.

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A Case for the Empires

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This paper seeks to examine whether a quintessential evil empire is indeed inherently immoral and depraved, and to evidence its benefits for the average science fiction denizen.

The phrase 'evil empire' has been in use since the early 1983 when President Ronald Reagan used it to describe the Soviet Union in his speeches, depicting the Cold War's arms race as an extension of the "age-old struggle between good and evil" (Goodnight 72). Since then, the Evil Empire has become a regular fixture in popular culture. The Empire exists to emphasize the differences between the forces of good and evil. It is typically a totalitarian dictatorship led by a single supreme king or emperor, with the end objective of universal conquest (Encyclopedia Britannica). The objective of this paper is to analyse the character of the Evil Empire and to provide proof of the benefits of such a totalitarian rule.

Readers see the world only through the characters of one side of the conflict and consequently, are subject to each character's biases. Despite the material's narrative making these entities out to be purpose-made to 'bad guys', the Empires have occasionally been a beneficial presence to the citizens of the universe they are situated in.

The Empire is seen as evil only because the story takes place through the eyes of those participating in the Rebellion. On the other hand, if most key "good" characters supported the Empire, it would stand as a symbol of stability, while any rebels they face are anarchists. This is true too, for the average citizen for whom the conflicts of the plot are only headlines in a newspaper.

In the *Star Wars Prequels*, the entirety of the known universe is governed by the Galactic Republic. The Republic is controlled by a Senate, which is in turn run by an elected chancellor who's in charge of the procedure, but has little real power. Scores of thousands of planets are represented in the Galactic Senate, making it simply too big to govern effectively. A collection of monarchs who get together in a parliament of kings is not a democracy but an oligarchy, which combines the flaws of both government models, while bringing the benefits of neither (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

The Senate moves so slowly that it is powerless to stop aggression between member states. In *The Phantom Menace* (1999), a supra-planetary alliance, the Trade Federation invades a planet and all the Senate can agree to do is call for an investigation. Even the Republic's staunchest supporters recognize this failing: In Episode I, Queen Amidala admits, "It is clear to me now that the Republic no longer functions" (*Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace*). Later, in Episode II, young Anakin Skywalker observes that it simply "doesn't work" *(Star Wars: Episode II - The Attack of the Clones*).

It is no wonder the populace embraces the Galactic Empire. While it may have been part of a dark plot centuries in the making, the Empire was legitimately formed by popular vote. The emergence of the Galactic Empire enabled the introduction of a single currency – the Imperial Credit, which was universally accepted. Furthermore, Darth Vader's systematic hunt of all Force-sensitive beings in the galaxy drastically reduced the chances of citizens being manipulated against their will by rogue Force-users. The Imperial Navy designed and built the Death Star, a massive weapon with the capacity to destroy entire planets. Yet, it uses it with discretion and specific targeting: eliminating Alderaan, the one world that is a hotbed of Rebel sentiment. The Navy acted as a route for citizens to better their lot in life and make a fresh start, by regularly recruiting troops to join their ranks.

Much has been made about the Emperor's

hatred for alien species, but despite his apparent preference for humans, the Empire is never shown to kill, hurt or subjugate any other species (Nationstates.net). In fact, quite the opposite is true. Darth Vader thought it acceptable to hire bounty hunters of all backgrounds to search for Han Solo and the Millennium Falcon, while all other aliens shown throughout the movies appear to be living normal lives much like their human counterparts. The Empire tolerated outposts of people not reporting to it as long as they weren't actively rebellious. There was nothing to indicate that Rebel sympathisers who wanted to recreate their morally nebulous priest-state out on the Outer Rim would be harassed or persecuted.

Imperial rule could be arbitrary, harsh and authoritarian (Quora.com); it was certainly an improvement over the Republic's previous dithering and disorganisation (Quora.com) This is brought to light in the Expanded Universe canon[1] by the large numbers of worlds which voted to re-join the Imperial Remnant and New Empire because Imperial order was preferable to the constant upheaval plaguing the rebooted Republic and Galactic Alliance:

> "Why are we fighting these men Arya?"
> "Because they stand between us and Galbatorix." (Paolini 185-186)

In Christopher Paolini's *Inheritance Cycle*, Carvahall, the hometown of the protagonist, carries a deep-rooted hatred for the Empire due to its negligence and tax collectors, and this emotion has become purely hereditary. Children are taught to hate the Empire simply because it's the Empire, yet it provides no proof for this hatred other than taxes.

> "These," he [Murtagh] paused, then said with distaste, "rebels are not only trying to overthrow the king but to destroy the Empire ... and I don't want that to happen. It would sow mayhem and anarchy. The king is flawed, yes, but the system itself is sound..." (Paolini 591).

If Galbatorix, the main antagonist and leader of the Empire, was evil, it was because he initiated an unnecessary war with the Riders[2], usurped a legitimate government, and allied with very questionable elements like the Ra'zac[3] to do it. Galbatorix wasn't motivated by normal revolutionary motives, but was fuelled by anger that he wasn't restored to what he felt was his rightful status in the Riders organization. As a result, he nearly drove extinct an ancient race (the Dragons) and devastated the world. Galbatorix was undoubtedly an evil man. Yet, despite the actions of its monarch as an individual, the Empire as a system worked. Galbatorix defended his Empire like any other ruler would, when confronted by a force that wants to take his power away, and he does this by ordering men to fight for him. These men would naturally appear evil to the Varden, an organisation that opposed Galbatorix, as would anyone trying to kill them.

If the Varden never started the war with Galbatorix, then he never would have been driven by the suspicion that Varden members were residing in the villages of Yazuac and Cantos and grown paranoid enough to destroy them. In various cities such as Dras Leona, Teirm, Narda, and Carvahall (before the Ra'zac started looking for Saphira's[4] egg), Gilead, and even in Urubaen, there is no evidence that the Empire was oppressing or harming its citizens in any way. To quote Oromis himself, "they lived normal lives, untouched by the king's madness" (Paolini 351). The author attempts to address this issue in *Eldest* (2005), the second book of

the Inheritance Cycle. In an attempt to further groom Eragon as the leader of a new generation of Riders, his mentor Oromis asks him to justify the Varden's cause. There is no evidence to support the claim that the people living in the Empire were being oppressed or harmed by it in any way.

Galbatorix and the Empire do not really directly impact the citizens' lives other than to take their children away to have them serve in the fight against the Varden. Logically, these people would oppose the Varden, as the opposing force which would take their children from them. Following this logic, if Galbatorix had annihilated the Varden, the people would be happy because their children would be safe. They would praise Galbatorix because he rescued them not just by protecting their children, but also from being in direct line of fire, because the Varden was a much greater threat to the peasantry:

> "When marching into new territory, obtaining supplies for an army was a simple matter of confiscating food and other essentials from the people they conquered, and stripping the resources of the surrounding countryside. Like a plague of locusts, the Varden left a barren swath of land in their wake, a swath devoid of most everything needed to support life." (Paolini 214).

An "ends justify the means" concept is at work for the Empire, where they want to control everything, simply because they believed themselves to be superior in morality and intellect than the rest of the world. The Rebellion believes in the power of ordinary people to choose their own destiny, since putting power into any smaller group's hands will unbalance the whole system and create maelstrom.

The Rebellion desires freedom at risk of anarchy. They do not actually want anarchy or the complete lack of a governing class. The goal is to have the commoners dictate their own lives, a government that answers to the people rather than a people that answers to its government. The Empire wants order at risk of tyranny. The best way to accomplish that is to have a controlling hand in everything. Left unchecked, humanity will destroy itself.

Notes

1. The Expanded universe is the compilation of the officially licensed, fictional material of the *Star Wars* saga, excluding of the seven feature films, *The Clone Wars* film and series, and *Rebels* series produced by Lucasfilm.

2. The Dragon Riders were a coalition of elves and dragons formed to forge peace and order between the elves and dragons. During the time of the book, they consist of a group of humans and elves who ride dragons.

3. The Ra'zac were one of the several ancient races that were thought to have followed the humans across the sea to Alagaësia. They were a race that fed on humans and likely came from the same homelands.

4. Saphira is the dragon of the main protagonist, Eragon. A rider and his dragon are linked in both mind and body.

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The Morality of Free Will

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This paper attempts to explore the novel A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess in accordance with the themes of the Original Sin, moral responsibility as well as the morality of intrinsic free will.

A Clockwork Orange, by Anthony Burgess, the controversial 20th-century novella (which was later made into one of the most notorious films of all time), is more popular for its ideas of behavioural modification than for its plot involving 'Ultraviolence.' Anthony Burgess, in the novel, explores a government that uses means of psychological manipulation in order to cure juvenile delinquency and lower the terrifyingly high rates of local crime. Alex Delarge is classically conditioned via aversion therapy which leads him to feel "violently ill" upon witnessing or even thinking about violence, including rape. What may have seemed like a success for the society, the successful 'taming' of a delinquent by the state, poses an impetuous question to readers across generations: Is it better for a man to be conditioned to be good, than choose to be bad? Burgess describes the concept of the novel as "The idea of free will. This is not just half-baked existentialism; it's an old Catholic theme" (Burgess, Ingersoll and Ingersoll 8). He argues inherent original sin, his thoughts oscillating from the Catholic moral responsibility to free will. This paper aims to discuss both of these concepts as well as the morality of intrinsic free will.

The title of the novel itself explains Burgess's treatment of free will. It is "the application of a mechanistic morality to a living organism oozing with juice and sweetness" (Burgess xi). He goes on to add that if said free will is impeded, it is then that the person becomes "a clockwork orange….an organism lovely with colour and juice but is in fact only a clockwork toy to be wound up by God or the Devil or (since this is increasingly replacing both) the Almighty State" (Burgess ix). The novel was first written as a cathartic response to horrifying news of proposed usage of conditioning of prisoners in the United States. Burgess had always seen the government as oppressive, particularly of free will. He was quoted saying, "All Governments are evil" (Newman 63) and "the state…we have no duty at all, certainly no duty of charity" (Newman 63). Burgess maintains a pelagianistic view throughout *A Clockwork Orange*, which is essentially the belief that human beings are capable of choosing between good or evil sans Divine Aid. It also functions on the belief that ancestral sin has not, in fact, tarnished the purity of human nature. Thus, Burgess operates on Pelagian hope for humankind. All human beings must find their own way, operating through moral choice as and when they are faced by difficult choices. Only experience strengthens moral will, thus making sure that an individual makes ideal, socially acceptable decisions in the long run. In order for this to happen, a human may have to make 'bad decisions' in the short run. Burgess is quoted saying, "It is better to have our streets infested with murderous young hoodlums than to deny individual freedom of choice" (Newman 65).

Although this may seem unconventional, controlling someone's will is in no way effective neither is it moral. The aversion therapy is actually ineffective, if studied out of the context of the jail where episodes of violence are common and thus, will incite the nauseated response from Alex. However, post therapy, had Alex been allowed to return to society, in most probability he would have returned to his old ways in a matter of a few days. Therefore, the therapy cannot be established as completely successful in the first place. Secondly, it would cause more violence in the long run firstly due to the participant detesting the government for what was done to him. This is also how the United States version of the novel and

the movie ends, with DeLarge saying, 'I was cured, all right" *(A Clockwork Orange*). and returning to his own ways. And secondly, the therapy is not successful anyway. (The possibility of success outside of jail is unknown).

In actual research conducted by American behavioural psychologist Saunders, the intention of therapy was to cure delinquency, thereby drawing a frightening parallel between the dystopian future as depicted in *A Clockwork Orange* and the real world.

> "The third possibility is treatment, fixing the deviants. What information has been developed by the mod squad on this matter shows that whatever fixing goes on in our current system is appears when the prisoner goes home. Fixing the environment within the prison with behaviour mod may make a crowd of nice, sociable prisoners. But when they are back in the street, their behaviour is controlled by the payoffs of the street, of their friends, their work (if they can get it), and their families. There is not much chance that what behaviour you fix in the prison will stay fixed. If you want to fix a criminal's behaviour, you have to fix it where it counts. The criminal must be plugged into the right payoffs at home" (Saunders 121).

However, even though anti-behaviourists such as Burgess and Aldous Huxley (of *A Brave New World*) are against the morality of behavioural interventions, they do not deny the effectiveness of some of said procedures. Huxley mentioned Walden Two as a possible solution to the problems pushing society in his Brave New World, and described (in glowing terms) a society that used "Pavlov for positive purposes his last novel, Island" (Newman 68).

While Burgess appears to have taken an 'anti-behavioural modification" stand in general, he has taken a special distaste to the methods of Skinner as illustrated in *A Fable for Social Scientists*.

> "In *A Fable for Social Scientists*, Burgess (1973) drops all pretensions and has some students discuss Skinner by name (while sitting over a vandalized plaque they have found which bears Skinner's image). They discuss life and art under the Skinnerian system and agree that since passion and pain would be killed, there must, of necessity, be only "calligraphic" art. Burgess ends the talk regarding Skinner's thought with one of the discussants drawing the curious conclusion, 'all that business about a technology of behaviour--it's just classroom talk. Thank God, we don't have to worry. Skinner didn't mean it after all. We're free.' Burgess' satire ends with the comment that, in English slang, "B.F." stands for Bemused Fictionalizer" (Newman 65).

It is, however, essential to keep in mind that it is the methods that are questionable, not the entire concept of therapy. It is argued that Man Balaglass in the novella is based on B. F. Skinner. For instance, in a follow-up novel to *A Clockwork Orange*, titled *The Clockwork Testament*, it appears as though Burgess has read Skinner but perhaps not completely understood his ideas. With respect to *A Clockwork Orange*, Burgess' bias can be understood by considering the effectiveness of Skinnerian Methodism in a rigidly controlled environment, such as a prison. For Alex DeLarge, the repercussions of the therapy are a suicide attempt as well as the vivid dreams that happen to be of a hallucinatory nature, which land him in

the hospital. Somehow the conditioning is reversed. The details of this process are vague and possibly inaccurate, which only supports the hypothesis of Burgess not understanding conditioning. However, it is of utmost importance to recall that it is the morality of the process that is being questioned by him, and not the scientificness. Thus, while the science is not irrelevant, it is secondary in the argument of the ethicality of behavioural modification.

The bone to pick with behavioural therapy is the morality of psychological manipulation as opposed to ineffectiveness. In the novel, the government emphasizes on the stability of the state over the happiness of its citizens. The latter is sacrificed for the sake of stability; that is to say, a government that wants to control its people by foregoing their happiness and deciding to achieve this by violating a human right is no better than a dictatorship. It is implied, of course, that the final intention is positive, as the goal is to create a safer state. However, doing this by defying the foundation on which countries have been built is never moral. Generations of oppressed peoples who look to have a safe, healthy life do not aim to have one that is achieved by doing what was done to them, but this time by people who are supposed to protect their rights as opposed to violating them. A safe state is essential for longevity, but the conditioning alters natural responses which are important for people to live authentically and naturally. For the people to thrive and grow, variation is important and undoubtedly, less crime is ideal. Behavioural modification, however, does more harm than good. It is better for a man to choose to be bad, than be conditioned to be good. This is an opinion that seems impractical momentarily, but in the long run, it is the best pathway to a healthy future.

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A Return To The Roots

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This paper seeks to question whether the attributes of dystopian and post-apocalyptic futures provided in fiction are progressive, and to draw parallels to a Hobbesian State of Nature.

Harken!
Here comes the dawn of a new world, a new civilization,
So primal and war stricken,
There is suffering all around.
Look close, isn't it our primitive world, new found?

Dystopian literature offers an insight into the societies of the distant future. It provides a futuristic world with development in every possible domain of life. However, to determine the nature of these societies as progressive remains a debatable topic. When examined in the light of an apocalypse, these societies turn out to be contrasting in nature. Post-apocalyptic societies portray a striking resemblance to Thomas Hobbes' *State of Nature* - a society where there is war of all against all and humans revert to their primitive, savage nature (Suda 102). Employing *Mad Max (*1979), *The Road* (2005) by McCarthy and *The Scarlet Plague* (1912) by Jack London as primary references, this paper aims to investigate the reversion of post-apocalyptic societies to the Hobbesian State of Nature.

According to Hobbes, the State of Nature is a hypothetical alternative to civil society. It resembles a condition in which men would be reduced to, in the absence of external control (Dyson 17). The fundamental aspects of Hobbesian state of nature are found in the post-apocalyptic societies. The congruity between the two can be established by means of various factors.

Hobbes believed that in the state of nature, there could be no industry, culture, letters, art and no society, thus symbolizing a fall in civilization (Suda 104). Post-apocalyptic societies are characterized by the same phenomenon. They are caused by a variety of factors such as scarcity of resources, as in *Mad Max*, the epidemic in *The Scarlet Plague* by Jack London, and the apparent nuclear disaster in *The Road* by McCarthy. These factors are responsible for bringing about the end of the world. The helplessness resulting from these incidents leads to further chaos and anarchy, leaving behind no trail of civilization, nor any trace of infrastructure or social institutions. The complete absence of culture manifests itself in the form of questions posed in *The Scarlet Plague*, such as "What is education?" (London 17). Language takes a back seat in a world where there are no letters. Children's speech comprises of "guttural words" and "explosive phrases" (London 9) which fail to follow any syntax. Their activities are limited to hunting and playing, representing a tribal existence. This loss of language and culture emerging from the severed ties of post-apocalyptic societies reinstate Hobbes' state of nature.

> "In the midst of our civilization, down in our slums and labor-ghettos, we had bred a race of barbarians, of savages; and now, in the time of our calamity, they turned upon us like the wild beasts they were and destroyed us. And they destroyed themselves as well" (London 51).

With the fall in civilization, people lose their ability to reason. They are governed by their egoistic impulses and passions. With no regulating authority they fall prey to their animalistic *id*. As a result of this, the baser instincts in human beings upsurge. In the movie *Mad Max*, there is rampant outrage brought about by the hoodlums. Ranging from killing and terrorizing innocents to vandalizing property, they indulge in all kinds of immoral activities. The brutal

killing of a woman and child and the rape of a civilian couple are embodiments of cruelty and savagery. Animals, too, are victims of this barbarism. A scene where a dog is killed and hanged upon a tree highlights the extent of the cruelty perpetrated by the hoodlums. This unruly behaviour of man in post-apocalyptic societies resembles the Hobbesian man in the State of Nature, who is driven by animalistic impulses. He identifies man as completely egoistic and states that "force and fraud become the cardinal qualities" (Suda 103). Thus, the condition of life in post-apocalyptic societies is miserable, like the nasty, poor, brutish and short life described in the Hobbesian State of Nature.

Owing to such brutal conditions of life and the absence of implementation of laws and rights, individuals face the constant fear of a violent death. There is no governing authority present in society to restrain the criminals in this society, governed by the principle of 'Might is Right' as in the Hobbesian state of nature (Dyson 33), and the weak are left at the mercy of the powerful. "He beat her with those terrible fists of his and made her his slave" (London 76). The assault of Vesta by Bill illustrates the power that lies with "a strong and violent man" (London 78). The helpless state of the weak lies in Smith's inability to aid or rescue her from his trap. The father carrying a pistol and fire everywhere represents the constant fear of death. Thus, the people in post-apocalyptic societies live in a condition of perpetual and oppressive fear. They stand exposed to the danger of being attacked by others and lack any security except their own strength like the men in Hobbesian state of nature.

On the other hand, Locke argues man to be inherently civil and governed by reason (Suda 145). While the apocalyptic society conforms to the Hobbesian state of nature, it also shares elements with that described by John Locke.

Locke differs from Hobbes while determining the disposition of man in the state of nature. He assumes that "men are basically decent, orderly and socially minded fellows, quite capable of ruling themselves" (Suda 145). Man is sociable and rational as compared to the brute in Hobbes' State of Nature. Thus, rationality is regarded as the pervasive characteristic of man. The central characters of the aforementioned works represent this faction of civil society. Even in extreme conditions, they try to live by their ethics and follow the right code of conduct. The unnamed boy in the novel *The Road*, turns out to be an incarnation of Locke's man. He tries to help all the survivors that he encounters. His determination to help the lost boy, the old man, the man struck with lightening and the thief, despite the dangers that might follow, represent the inherent goodness of man. The lady and the thief who finally look after the boy also fall under the same category of people who are governed by the light of reason. "Locke's state of nature was one of peace, good will, mutual assistance and preservation" (Suda 146). The community of survivors carries along all those who remain and are shown to be existing in harmony in *The Road*. The efforts of Jim, the officer in *Mad Max,* to rehabilitate the couple who was raped and to punish the criminals, validate this condition of mutual assistance and preservation of peace. The 47 people who survive the plague in London's novel also conform to this condition as they try to live by helping each other.

Unlike the Hobbesian state of nature, where there is a complete absence of society, there is evidence which shows the struggle to preserve earlier advancement. The Granser in *The Scarlet Plague* retains his books and a key to the alphabet in a cave, so that the future generations can benefit. He tries his best to impart knowledge and conditions

of a better civilization to his grandchildren (London 88). Similarly, the father in *The Road* tries to retain his culture by reviving and performing old rites, telling his son, "When you've nothing else, construct ceremonies out of the air and breathe upon them" (McCarthy 22). The child too expresses his gratitude to the dead in his prayers. They do not give in to eating human flesh or killing for food despite the starvation. Thus, the ties of post-apocalyptic societies have not been completely severed from civilization.

In Locke's state of nature, "the execution of the law of nature is, in that state put into every man's hands, whereby everyone has the right to punish the transgressor of law" (Suda 147). Thus, each individual has a right to restrain the ill-doer in the society. This can be seen in *Mad Max*, where Jim and Max try to punish the offenders. However, this judgment can take an unreasonable turn when influenced by partiality, and passion. To seek revenge for his wife and child, Max kills all of the offenders brutally by running vehicles over them. He also leaves Johnny, the main antagonist, to struggle before setting him ablaze.

Locke also maintains self-preservation and duty to self as the first prerogative of man (Bluhm 305). However, while doing so, victims themselves turn perpetrators. In *The Road*, the father fails to reason under the pretext of self-preservation. The extreme struggle to save himself and his son pushes him to inhumane lengths. He unflinchingly shoots the man who takes his son and also refuses to help a lost child, dying people and a man struck by lightning. He makes the thief who took their supplies strip naked in the cold, and ransacks homes for food and clothes. The survivors take up to cannibalization in their extreme need to keep themselves alive. Similarly, with the onset of the plague in *The Scarlet Plague*, people cease to recognize humans as humans. Rather, they begin seeing them as objects of danger and ostracize all those suffering from the plague. Fearing the spread of the disease, they even kill the prowlers who try to gain shelter among them. Under the garb of self-preservation and defense, the men acquire the right to kill others. Thus, they ultimately turn into the brutes of Hobbesian state of nature, pushed to the lowest rungs of the hierarchy of needs where survival becomes the only imperative.

Though there are commonalities between post-apocalyptic societies and John Locke's State of Nature, it predominantly conforms to the Hobbesian State of Nature. We see that while the characters in *Mad Max* and *The Road* resort to violence under the pretext of self-preservation, the ultimate result remains the same. Man is taken over by inherent barbaric instincts while meting out punishment to wrongdoers, so that even cultured entities are forced to become uncivilized. Grandfather, in *The Scarlet Plague*, gives up the idea of transforming his grandchildren into civilized beings and decides to become one of them, ultimately succumbing to a savage existence. This provides credence to the semblance between post-apocalyptic societies and Hobbesian state of nature which nullifies the progress of a civilization as it returns to its original primitive state. Hence, the movement of the apocalyptic civilization is circular rather than terminal in nature, reestablishing the historical doom and gloom of civilizations. As London remarks, "The human race is doomed to sink back farther and farther into the primitive night ere again it begins its bloody climb upward to civilization" (19).

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An Uncertain Ecstasy

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This paper attempts to interpret the tradeoff between liberty and happiness in the novel Brave New World, through various facets of the social mechanism of Aldous Huxley's imagination.

Dystopian literature invariably paints a picture of absolutism. George Orwell's chilling prophecy of a society typified by captivity, surveillance and censorship in *1984* (1949) still dominates the mural of the dystopian literary canon. However, the more subdued colours that peek through its fissures tell of a milder, but equally perturbing turn of fate for the human race. Aldous Huxley's novel, *Brave New World*[1] (1932), exemplifies the hedonistic nihilism of a consumerist society - one that is suppressed by endowing pleasure, not pain.

The novel, which exhibits traits of an allegory, was written in 1931 as a reaction to the corpus of utopian literature that ruled the roost at the time, but the darts of the satire pierced H.G. Wells's *Men Like Gods* (1923). Huxley received his fair share of derision, with Wells retorting, "A writer of the standing of Aldous Huxley has no right to betray the future as he did in that book" (Samaan 191). The novel of ideas is set in London in the year 632 A.F. – 'After Ford' (equivalent to 2540 AD). Led by ten World Controllers, the World State is a benevolent dictatorship. The State Motto is "Community, Identity, Stability" (Huxley 5). Certain individual freedoms are compromised in the name of universal happiness, as exemplified in this excerpt of World Controller Mustapha Mond's speech:

> "The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get […] they're never ill; they're not afraid of death; they're plagued with no mothers or fathers; they've got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about; […] And if anything should go wrong, there's soma" (Huxley 151).

The society worships Henry Ford, an idea that is as disconcerting as it is humorous. Indeed, Ford's assembly line finds application even in reproduction. With viviparous reproduction dismissed as obscene, embryos are "decanted" in Hatcheries and Conditioning Centres (Huxley 8). Fœtuses are, quite literally, designed to perform predestined roles in the socio-economic milieu, giving rise to the caste system. The permanently limited population is divided into Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons; each bifurcated into sub-castes. Embryos destined to become Alphas, the intellectuals, mature naturally to term, whereas the rest are subject to caste - appropriate degrees of ectogenesis, causing stunted physical and intellectual growth. Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons, who perform blue-collar jobs, are essentially clones created via Bokanovsky's Process, which enables a singular egg to spawn up to 96 embryos. The process is touted as "one of the major instruments of social stability", producing "standard Gammas, unvarying Deltas, uniform Epsilons" (Huxley 7-8).

Despite the arbitrariness of the caste system, there is a distinct absence of dissent in the brave new world. The reason, in a word, is conditioning. Employing techniques of hypnopædia (sleep conditioning) and neo-Pavlovian conditioning, the people of the World State are subtly coerced into accepting carefully constructed notions as axiomatic. These caste-appropriate subconscious messages are aimed at "making people like their unescapable social destiny" (Huxley 13). Social convention advocates recreational sex, and dismisses notions of intimacy and familial relations as pornographic. 'Home' was "an understerilised prison," of "darkness, disease and smells" (Huxley 27). The Malthusian Belt, containing "the regulation supply of contraceptives,"

(Huxley 36) is a trendy fashion accessory for the small proportion of upper-caste women who are fertile.

Employing the voice of an omniscient narrator, Huxley seamlessly shuffles across various character perspectives. While protagonists Bernard Marx, Helmholtz Watson and John the Savage are in continual conflict with their conformity to the prevalent social order, characters such as Mustapha Mond, The Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning, and Fanny Crowne are spokespersons for convention, and continually justify established social norms, usually through hypnopædic aphorisms. Huxley's diction is functional, lending a meticulous quality to his style, which mirrors the scientific exactitude of societal operations in the novel. The novel, thus, is ambivalent. Huxley does not explicitly take a stand, but rather, incites readers to explore the tradeoff between freedom and happiness for themselves.

For example, religion, in society is presented bilaterally. Christianity, totemism and ancestral worship prevail in the Savage Reservations— resource-strapped geographical areas that the State considers too costly to develop. The inhabitants are likened to tribals, content in their microcosm of austere, familial existence. Huxley doesn't paint a pretty picture of the old world either. Life in the Reservations is plagued with poverty, disease, old age, and blind suffering in the name of religion. Their religious practices are exposed as hollow in Mustapha Mond's comment, "The gods are just. No doubt. But their code of law is dictated […] by the people who organise society; Providence takes its cue from men" (Huxley 160). Citizens frequent caste-exclusive Solidarity Services which comprise of intoxication by soma[2] (a drug which causes opiate-like effects), chanting of hymns (parodies of popular nursery rhymes) and group hypnosis, culminating in an orgy. The ineffectiveness of the Service on protagonist Bernard Marx's temperament could indeed be a subtle, ingenious play on Karl Marx's famous maxim, "Religion […] is the opium of the people" (Marx).

Bernard Marx is the pariah of the Alpha Plus posse. The alleged result of a decanting error, he is rather short and skinny for his caste. "A chronic fear of being slighted made him avoid his equals, made him stand, where his inferiors were concerned, self consciously on his dignity" (Huxley 44). Bernard's insecurities about his inadequacy make him strive towards individualism, towards a mental space where he would be "free - not enslaved by [his] conditioning," and "not just a cell in the social body" (Huxley 61). Bernard befriends Helmholtz Watson, who is described as "a little too able." Success comes by a tad too easily for the Emotional Engineer, causing him to become increasingly aware of an emptiness in his achievements. In Helmholtz, mental excess produces "the artificial impotence of asceticism" (Huxley 45). His disillusionment with society, in contrast to Bernard's more selfish motives, is born out of genuine altruism. Although envious of Helmholtz's superiority, Bernard takes comfort in their shared nonconformities, for "if one's different, one's bound to be lonely" (Huxley 91). Like Bernard and Helmholtz, John the Savage, too, is a pariah in both the Savage Reservation, and civilized London. He is the biological son of the D.H.C. and Linda, a Beta Plus woman who went missing on a trip to a Savage Reservation and adapted to their lifestyle, somewhat poorly. John was a misfit because of his mother's habitual promiscuity in a monogamous society. Her consumerist conditioning also made austerity unfathomable. When Bernard

brings John to civilised London to expose the truth about the Director's 'family,' the latter is something of a celebrity. Having read from but a copy of Shakespeare's works as a child, he is unsurprisingly outraged by the infantilism of 'civilised society.' The internal conflict forces him to live in seclusion and resort to self-mutilation. John's self-wielded flogging turns into a macabre spectacle; hoards of people appear to watch the scene with perverse awe. John's mental discord leads to his eventual suicide, for "no offence is so heinous as the unorthodoxy of behaviour" (Huxley 100).

The pursuits of art, beauty and literature do not find a place in the social schema of the World State, for they are deemed devoid of practical use. The leaders of the utilitarian society however, fear their latent power to decondition every maxim taken for granted. "For true blissed-out and vacant servitude, though, you need an otherwise sophisticated society where no serious history is taught" (Hitchens 37). Citizens instead indulge in consumerist pursuits such as Centrifugal Bumblepuppy, Electromagnetic Golf, and mindless movies that engage all the senses, called the 'feelies.' Furthermore, social stability renders 'civilised' minds unable to comprehend art-"You can't make tragedies without social instability" (Huxley 151). Huxley here accentuates the tendency of art to romanticize suffering. To quote Charles Dickens, "Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are the rain upon the blinding dust of the earth, overlying our hard hearts," (Dickens 178). This is precisely why the works of Shakespeare and Dickens were taboo in the World State. Indeed, the socialist, anti-romantic writings of George Bernard Shaw were among the few literary works accessible to its citizens. In the World State, art, truth and religion are the cost of comfort and happiness. Having lived through love and pain, John the Savage most emphatically chooses the former, if only to meet his tragic end. "But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin" (Huxley 163).

Where does the conditioned mind seek comfort? The World State advocates copious consumption of soma to suppress any sadness, thereby maintaining social stability. Soma is an intoxicating pill that promises "all the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects" (Huxley 37). Citizens of the World State are seen ingesting the drug with an alarming consistency, even in the most mildly distressing situations. Bernard however, displays a certain hesitancy in this regard, particularly when offered some in response to an outburst. "I'd rather be myself," he says. "Myself and nasty. Not somebody else, however jolly" (Huxley 60). In doing so, Bernard deposes the hypnopædic adage, "A gramme [of soma] is always better than a damn" (Huxley 60).

The protagonist's behaviour does raise a pertinent question: Can an artificially-induced high be called happiness at all? Sigmund Freud, who, like Henry Ford, is deified in Society, opines: "What is called happiness in its narrowest sense comes from the satisfaction - most often instantaneous – of pent-up needs which have reached great intensity" (Freud 8). Admittedly, there exist innumerable entities that kindle human happiness. Present-day society tends to estimate the veracity of happiness experienced by the barometer of its source. Isn't all happiness externally induced, be it from cathartic literature or strong alcohol? According to Freud, certain sources of mirth take precedence over others.

> "The services rendered by intoxicating substances in the struggle for happiness […] rank so highly as a benefit that both individuals and races have given them an established position

within their libido-economy. It is not merely the immediate gain in pleasure which one owes to them, but also a measure of that independence of the outer world which is so sorely craved" (Freud 9).

Defining happiness, is therefore, highly circumstantial, and depends on the kind and extent of human drives that need fulfillment. Huxley, employing nimble and witty prose, creates a future that is at once, inconceivable and yet, foreseeable. Is the idea of universal happiness worth sacrificing individualism? Indeed, Huxley himself offers his readers a choice- a choice to determine whether the human race can be trusted to exercise independence, or whether passive acceptance of benevolent control is the lesser evil.

Notes

1. The title of the novel is taken from Miranda's lines in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Miranda is raised on a desert island in isolation and on her maiden contact with mainstream, 'civilised' society, she exclaims "[…] O brave new world, That has such people in't." Huxley plays on the irony of the statement, for Miranda soon discovers that the new world is littered with saboteurs.

2. The hallucinogenic intoxicant *soma* is an allusion to the eponymous drink consumed in ancient Vedic culture.

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A Dystopian Crescendo

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This paper attempts to highlight the impact of dystopian-themed music and anime over the youth and the perceptions of people in today's society.

Humans believed in the perfectibility of mankind -- until the events of the 20th century crushed this belief. The idea of totalitarianism was hardly ignored. There was an eruption of an anti-utopian society– an anti-utopian society with a variety of names, be it Dystopia or Cacotopia. Dystopia is the reverse of utopia. Both of these terms are ambiguous in nature. Utopia is state of paradise and flawlessness. As Chris Ferns argues, “In reality, it is ‘no place desirable’, but at the same time unattainable” (39). A dystopia is a state of imperfection and dehumanizing where peace does not exist. "A dystopian society is ruled by a group with a private agenda in euphemisms or outright lies” (Ferris 2). The ruling party uses conditioning or coercion to maintain their rule and suppress the ruled citizens, which is often mirrored in such real-world systems, such as Communist societies and apartheid. Utopia is as much a critical device as it is a desired society, often holding up a mirror to our society, reflecting its downfalls and responding to the negatives (Academia. edu). As the concept of dystopia has paved its way through literary sources and the media, a hypothesis is built up as to whether dystopian literature has positive or negative impacts on the minds of the teens through music.

Plato’s *Republic* is considered utopian in nature. Hence, it makes the concept of utopia and dystopia a concept that is centuries old. It is a comprehensive genre. There is no full understanding of this theme. Dystopian literature has attained its share of both fame and notoriety because of its appeal to both the emotional and intellectual sensibilities of the audience; for example, *1984* by George Orwell is one of the most well-known in this category. It has paved its way from literary sources to audio-visual. (Academia.edu).

David Sisk asked, "by controlling language, can a speaker also control the thoughts of others who speak that language?" (Academia.edu). Language plays an important role in utopias and dystopias and its consequential relationship with power and control. Dystopian music is thought to have taken root in the late 19th century. It has captured the attention of the adolescent through music and television shows. Music is a strong compound and has profound effect on the brain, as proven by countless studies. If music holds the power to heal, correspondingly, it can make some serious damage to an individual’s personality. The psychology of a person is affected. Music gives a sense of control. It causes change of emotion in a flick. Most teens are taken aback by Coldplay and The Rolling Stones, but they are unaware of the conceptualisation of dystopia. Metallica, Coldplay, Linkin Park, The Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd are leading bands popular in public for their compositions. Albums like *Mylo Xyloto* by *Coldplay* and *Obsolete* by Fear Factory and some singles in particular such as *Unforgiven* by Metallica. The portrayal of the society may be exaggerated, but isn’t completely unrealistic. *Mylo Xyloto, Unforgiven* and *Obsolete* mainly narrow down one theme, which is an antagonistic power ruling over mankind -- A machine-controlled society and the uprising of the rebels, the rule breakers. *“I will not stand condemnation”* (Obsolete). It makes teenagers question the nuances of the society. It has led to teenagers discovering societies much different from the ones they encounter on a daily basis. It gives a glimpse into the happenings of the society while realising the importance of independence. This leads to the creation of rebels. It provides young adults with the feeling of bringing about political change,

just like the speakers. It makes the individual question the inadequacies present in the society in which they dwell-- a way to create change, to be the change. Using struggles in a teenager's life is a way to parallel the dystopian nature of the language within a societal setting that adolescents can understand. "Reach for the sky, Touch the sky, revive a hope, for mankind" (Obsolete). The use of dystopian language as lyrics makes adolescents see themselves making similar judgements. Teenagers want to relate to the speaker in the lyrics of the song, in the hope of encouraging change in today's current society by sharing an attachment with music.

The concept of dystopia was transferred from mere audio to audio-visual. One of the upcoming genres is anime. Anime is a style of animation that was created in Japan and that uses colourful images, strong characters, and stories that have a lot of action (Merriam-Webster.com). It is a genre of animated films. Anime art style had an uprising in the 1960s. Today, anime is all over the Internet and broadcasted worldwide. Most anime showcases dystopian characteristics; *Romeo x Juliet, (Code Geass) of the Rebellion, Ghost in the Shell,* and *Guilty Crown* are a few notable examples of this. *Guilty Crown* has the basic rudiments of storytelling, which are the protagonist and an antagonist. The story takes place in Tokyo in 2039, after the outbreak of the "Apocalypse Virus" during what became known as the "Lost Christmas" of 2029. Since this outbreak, Japan has been under the control of the multinational organization called GHQ. Ouma Shu is a 17-year-old boy who mistakenly obtains a rare and great power. He can use this power, "The Right Hand of the King," to extract "voids," or tools/weapons that are the manifestations of peoples' hearts (Myanimelist.net). *Guilty Crown* proves the age-old axiom of good triumphing over evil. Anime is the more mature, flip side of cartoons. It consists of developed plots and pragmatic characters, along with the peripheral effects of the id-based pleasure sometimes derived from on-screen violence and carnage, without any realisation that it is accumulated at the back of one's mind, deep in the subconscious. The positives of anime, however, can be the cause of social interaction. Anime is the new 'black' among the contemporary youth, a craze, commonly discussed across social media, and quickly gaining popularity among sitcoms, dramas, and other shows. It makes anime-lovers welcomed in a social group. It can be used as a form of escapism. It can inspire and enlighten the youth about certain cultural aspects. Anime and its effects are maximal. Anime can be extremely optimistic or pessimistic. Also, anime is subject to age restrictions; that is to say, they are meant to be watched by a certain age group. Anime does have some educative as well as informative factors and due to this, limitations might end up being too restrictive.

Adolescents and adults unknowingly hum these dystopian anthems, without any knowledge of how it impacts their minds. Dystopian music or anime has the power to make an individual believe in a non-existent utopian society. It creates a dilemma between protagonists and antagonists and empowers the teenager with the strength to make judgments. These youngsters might just re-evaluate the society they live in, perhaps seeing their parents as protagonists dictating to them the rules and regulations of life. The auditory and the visual memories left behind in the mind echo frustration. It changes the perspective of a person. That particular individual is "zoomed" into another world. It makes one believe that his or her rights are limited, with minimal

privacy. The term 'dystopia' creates a notion in the minds of people as a pessimistic ideal. Correspondingly, when it comes to any content related to dystopia, people tend to create and understand a world that isn't really perfect, and that, in a way, makes reality more comfortable. It creates a void for imperfection. In a way, it allows teenagers to believe that they, in some way can change the dystopic nature of the world and reality they live in. Dystopian music conveys that where it portrays a dystopic world where an individual often is the spark that triggers change from the dystopic nature.

"War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength," as famously quoted by George Orwell in his iconic dystopian tale, *1984* (Orwell 6). A single phrase can make any individual think and have an immense result on the psyche of the citizen. News and the media have the power to manipulate the minds of young citizens. Is the dystopia of the future set to become a reality of today? The answer may not be so far-off. In an article by *The Economist,* sci-fi author William Gibson observed that, "The future is already here - it's just not very evenly distributed."

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Your Species or Mine?

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Using a premise of psychoanalytical and Marxist social perspectives, this paper analyzes the psychological, economical and social dynamics between human and alien species, as portrayed in visual and literary texts, questioning whether inter-special conflict is indeed inevitable.

Science fiction can be defined as "a fiction of the imagination, rather than observed reality, a fantastic literature" (Roberts 1). This definition captures the capacity of such fiction to capture human interest by delving into the "phantasia" of the human mind, and juxtaposing it with scientific facts and details to create an illusion of reality that is more enhanced than the existing plane. Science fiction essentially leans on the platform of human inquisitiveness into the 'beyond'- the desire to further the purpose of human existence. This takes place through the artistic creation of worlds, entities, energies, and phenomenon that are based on scientific processes and material, but with social events and structures that are often entirely the product of authorial manipulation. Science fiction is based on the 'what ifs' – or even the 'if this goes on' (Gunn; Candelaria 8). Some of these very worlds and entities (with respect to their human counterparts), and certain equations of power in the spheres of politics, class conflict, and social interactions, are analysed here through two primary literary texts – *The Mote in God's Eye* (1974) by Larry Niven and Jenny Pournelle, often considered the epitome of novels about the first contact of human life and the 'Other', and H.G Well's iconic novel *War of the Worlds* (1898). Within the purview of visual media, which offers a heightened visualization of the other-worlds through images and acoustics, this thesis will be analyzing the movie Avatar, with which comparisons are drawn, and theories presented.

The human race has always shown a deep interest in establishing fictional species that create fear, apprehension, or any other sentiment that would otherwise not be evoked within us if we were dealing with known species, all of which is evident through the various cinematic tropes of collating sci-fi with horror and fantasy. Ample proof of the popularity of this intersection is made evident by the number of sci-fi/horror/fantasy movies present in the lists of the most popular movies of the 1960s-1980s. These movies include *Planet of the Apes* (1968), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), *Aliens* (1986), and *The Black Hole* (1979), amongst others (Mesce 138). Almost all of the sci-fi scenarios presented to the audience contain an element of the unknown, or the explicit need of the psyche to classify non-human species as the Other, the outgroup. A psychoanalytical stance would posit that humans have a genetic disposition to behave differentially towards "insiders" and "outsiders", leading to a "sociobiology of ethnocentrism" (Gilbert 561). It further goes on to affirm that human interaction is based on the proportion of shared genes, thus stating - "the likelihood of conflict between individuals or groups of individuals increases as the proportion of shared genes decreases" (Gilbert 561). Therefore, with the supposed different genetic makeup of an alien species, there is bound to be a certain level of conflict and lack of understanding between the alien and the human species. If we are to look at humans and the Other as two distinct classes, then we could conclude that this conflict is likely to manifest itself in the form of class-conflict, enforced by power imbalances in respective socio-political systems. The alien species could either be highly developed and intelligent, or weak and powerless; a third perspective could be that they are neither, and are simply a primitive, instinct-driven species that has accidentally entered into interaction with humans and follows the 'survival of the fittest'

predisposition, or has discovered Earth as being suitable territory for reproduction and breeding, with humans as viable threats to their progeny (Booker and Thomas 321). The aliens might take on such various forms, but there is always the difference of emerging from drastically different social and political systems, and being governed by an original set of principles and moral codes.

A Marxist perspective could be adopted to analyze these texts, with the parallel idea of humanity's constant urge to emerge as the fittest race. The Marxist idea of class refers to class distinction on the basis of the ownership of means of production (Marx 40). This implies a formal, economic base for the segregation of the population into classes that interact through the consequent power relations. These classes manifest in two broad forms: the Bourgeoisie, which owns the means of production, employs labour, and generates income in the form of profit, and the Proletariat, which does not own means of production and has to resort to the sale of their labour in order to survive (Marx 40). The ownership of the means of production and the gathering of profits renders the bourgeoisie more powerful, while the proletariat depends upon the bourgeoisie for income – a ripe socioeconomic condition for the promulgation of oppressive tactics that only benefit this bourgeoisie class, while the proletarians are consistently undermined and exploited. According to Engels, they are "reduced" to selling their labour – implying that, under the oppressive regime, they are systemically coerced into the depletion of themselves. This idea is subtly reiterated in fictional inter-species relationships; within the alien species itself, and between the alien and human species.

In the chosen novels - *The Mote in God's Eye*, and *War of the Worlds*, the readers observe a thematic commonality- mankind's contact with a sentient outer species, and their subsequent conflict of intellect and interest. However, they are two very distinct texts, with very different representations of the alien species. The Moties in *The Mote in God's Eye* occupy the position of the victim, trapped by their own fatalistic biological needs, with subspecies that have organized specializations such as Masters, Watch-makers, Warriors, and the like (Larry Niven). These subspecies have their own importance; the hidden Warrior caste being the most crucial part of the Moties' universe, as they are innately superior to humanity, and are specifically bred for battle. The Motie civilization is feudalistic, with the Masters controlling the rest of the sub-species, and devising colonial strategies to terminate, or even prolong the inevitable Motie wars, which stem from an incorrigible population explosion. This resonates with Marx's stages of historical materialism, where Marx and Engels disagree with previous historians about war being the driving force behind historical change (Gandy). Although the Moties are embroiled in war every time the population snowballs, there has been no significant change until the advent of the humans, leading the Masters to move forward in societal evolution by proposing the colonization of other planets through the use of human-specific technology. War is merely "an element of discontinuity", while the hope for the social and economic stability of historical change is represented through the onset of first contact.

The Martians in *The War of The Worlds* are a superior, intelligent species lacking in emotion, only fighting for survival – and yet, reflecting the Imperialist British rule in their invasion of Britain, therefore, mirroring the colonizers themselves (Wells). Wells was a Socialist - he projected this in his criticism of the creation of an Imperialist Empire in the scenario of a Martian invasion. Wells' novel came a good decade after Marx, yet its idea

of colonization and the foundation of an Imperialist society was foreseen by Marx in his *Capital* (Germain). Marx identified the need for the export of capital to underdeveloped countries, and how a capitalist society must develop and enlarge its exploitative base (Germain). The Martian's act of landing on Earth is an "act of colonization", relegating humanity to the position of an inferior race, or an inferior species (Parrinder and Ketterer 9). The inevitable "violent revolution" (Burns 739), that Marx suggests will ensue if the bourgeoisie class and the proletariat do not reach a resolution regarding their class conflict, is represented in the novel by the immense war between the humans and the aliens, the inferior 'proletariat' and the superior class respectively.

These literary texts fall sharply in contrast to the movie chosen, which depicts the human race as the oppressor, with a lone human trying to subvert this oppression by his (a cisgender male in all three movies) own species, but still re-establishing the fact that humanity is ultimately the 'saviour' of the alien race. *Avatar* has more overt tones of Marxist theory present in it, and it is less subtle than the literary texts, due to the very visual depiction of emotion under oppressive duress. *Avatar* is, essentially, a story of human capitalist tendencies against the working class in a new, unexplored, resource-rich environment. The tribe of the Na'vi represents the working class, with Pandora symbolizing the 'underdeveloped' nation, while the imperialists are represented by Quaritch and Selfridge, the human military commanders. The plot falls in line with the idea of the resistance of the working class against the more powerful one, and critiques the social concepts of colonialism and imperialism (Tang 660). However, it deviates from the literary texts previously analysed in the sense that the protagonist, a member of the bourgeoisie class, deliberately separates from it in favour of the working class; this could be seen as showing the bourgeoisie class as incapable of compassion and co-operation, leading members who do not fit within this disposition to dissent and join the proletariat, with which they personally identify. This is both deviant from and congruent with Marxist thought, as it does acknowledge the hard class difference and class-consciousness, but does not have its base in economic factors.

The psychological idea of "Self" and the "Other" reverberates in inter-species relationships, especially in those species that have never experienced any sort of prior contact with each other. When applied to Marxist ideology, the bourgeoisie could be seen as the "Self," oppressing the "Other" or the proletariat, so as to prevent resistance against their current, comfortable situation. It is observed that the roles of the "Self" and the "Other" are not concretely filled by a particular species each, but are interchangeable between the human species and the alien species – at times, the human is the oppressed, the 'reduced' class, and at times, the alien species is exploited by the powerful human class. But one idea remains certain throughout the canon – when there is inter-species contact in science fiction, there is inevitable conflict.

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Death In The Time of Utopia

Farah Maneckshaw • FYBA

The grim description of a dystopic world is often attributed to the fancy of an author's imagination – but this paper presents real-life examples of human rights violations occuring in Lois Lowry's The Giver, while examing the ethics behind euthanasia and capital punishment.

In the wake of the murder of a child suffering from cerebral palsy by her own father, journalist Andrew Coyne was quoted saying "A society that believes in nothing can offer no argument even against death. A culture that has lost its faith in life cannot comprehend why it should be endured" (Smith). The father, Robert Latimer, said that "she'd had enough" and that he performed this heinous crime "out of love" (Baklinski). The ideas of infanticide and euthanasia have existed for centuries. In ancient Greece, Plutarch wrote that infanticide was a common practice in Sparta to rid the city of children who "lacked health and vigour" (Pavlos). Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato all favoured euthanasia but only under certain conditions (Pavlos). As organized religion flourished, euthanasia became morally and ethically condemned by religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, all of which consider human life to be sacred (Pavlos).

This paper will conduct an analysis of the topics of euthanasia and infanticide in the award-winning novel *The Giver* (1993) by Lois Lowry. The book explores the idea of a futuristic "Utopian" society where basic individual freedoms are forsaken for the benefit of conformity and uniformity. One of these benefits includes the right to life and liberty, a fundamental right guaranteed by Article 21 of the Indian constitution (Indiakanoon.org). When elderly people no longer have utility, they are "released" (or euthanized), as are sickly babies, without being given a say in the matter. In some cases the citizens may voluntarily opt for release, while in others it is meted out as a form of capital punishment. It is a prime example of the contention between the rights of the individual and societal conveniences as a whole. In *The Giver*, applying for "release" is a common occurrence and this research paper will explore the argument that an individual should be given the right to end their life and in what circumstances it should be permitted. While the ideas of "release" or murder may seem barbaric in the dystopian novel, it continues to be practiced today, and is often overlooked when it does occur. In the words of Keith M. Booker, dystopian literature is used to "provide fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural and inevitable" (3-4). Dystopias usually extrapolate elements of contemporary society and are read by many as political warnings about the future of society.

In the novel, there are a set of rules that are followed blindly and unequivocally. A felon who has violated these rules three times or who has committed a "heinous" crime like theft is liable to be released. Though the members of the community are unaware of the intricacies of release, they are aware that it is an immutable punishment: "For a contributing citizen to be released from the community was a final decision, a terrible punishment, an overwhelming statement of failure" (Lowry 2). Capital punishment or the death penalty is awarded in far too many countries that declare themselves civilised and forward-minded. Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan are a few of the industrialized democracies that still have the death penalty (Beauchamp). Most executions worldwide take place in Asia, besides in China especially in Islamic countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia (Beauchamp). There is much controversy regarding the subject of capital punishment, primarily in the recent Yakub Memon case, where a suspected terrorist was sentenced to death (Gupta).

Charles Dickens made his views on capital punishment clear in *Oliver Twist* when he said:

> "What a fine thing capital punishment is! Dead men never repent; dead men never bring awkward stories to light. The prospect of the gallows, too, makes them hardy and bold. Ah, it's a fine thing for the trade! Five of them strung up in a row, and none left to play booty or turn white-livered!" (137).

In George Orwell's *1984*, the punishment for 'thoughtcrime' or holding unspoken beliefs or doubts that oppose or question the ruling party is capital punishment. This indicates the dangers of totalitarianism and also highlights the injustice of the practice of the death penalty (Sparknotes.com).

One of the most harrowing incidents in *The Giver* is when the lighter child from pair of new born twins is "released" by giving him a hypodermic shot to his head. This can be likened to the situation of the pair of Australian twins who were born to a Thai surrogate mother. One of the twins, Gammy was born with Down's syndrome and it was revealed that the Australian parents who negotiated the surrogacy arrangement, Wendy and David Farnell, left him behind in Thailand while taking their other child Pipah, who was healthy, back to Australia (Marks).

Another case of euthanasia described in the book is when older citizens are euthanized when they are no longer considered productive members of society. Unaware of the actual consequences of release, the members even consider the release of an elder from the community a happy occasion: '"This morning we celebrated the release of Roberto", she told him. "It was wonderful."' (Lowry 32) Though the practice may seem to be a figment of the author's imagination, it is found in several parts of the world. For example a very crude form of 'mercy killing' still survives in some villages in south India (Shahina). Here, people take it upon themselves to 'cull' elderly persons who are bedridden and considered a burden to the family, with things as innocuous as oil and coconut water (Shahina). Though villagers claim they've buried the gruesome tradition, social activists say they haven't seen the last of it yet (Shahina). This is an ancient custom and is termed *thalaikoothal*[1] (Shahina).

Volunteering for release or assisted suicide is one of the other features of the dystopian society described in *The Giver.* An adolescent who learns of the cruel practices in her community voluntarily opts for release. Shortly thereafter, the protagonist finally realises the true meaning of the word release and is overcome with horror. Mimicking the voice he frequently hears from the speakers, he says: "I will do whatever you like, sir. I will kill people, sir. Old people? Small newborn people? I'd be happy to kill them, sir." (Lowry 152-153). Jodi Picoult's novel *Mercy* also deals with the subject of euthanasia. The book focuses on the trial of a man accused of murdering his wife who had been dying of cancer. Later, it is discovered that he was, in fact, asked by his wife to end her suffering and was acquitted of all charges. A parallel can be drawn to the Aruna Shanbaug case because of which the Indian Supreme court legalised passive euthanasia in 2011 (deSouza). The death of this nurse this year in 2015 has sparked renewed debate on the subject of mercy killing.

Edmund Spenser in his epic poem *The Faerie Queene* (qtd. in Picoult 7) wrote, "Who will not mercy unto others show, how can he mercy ever hope to have?" Whether it is ethical to allow individuals to choose to end their lives if they wish to is a subject of much debate and controversy. There are several organisations that advocate the right self-

euthanasia or the right to “die with dignity.” A better term for this is “Physician-Assisted Suicide” and is practiced in several countries as well. Thus, despite the barbaric and cruel connotation that it carries, much progress is being made in transforming euthanasia into a legal, societally acceptable phenomenon. It is not just a literary motif in dystopian novels but a living reality in modern society. In a sense, Lowry’s “release” can be understood not as something entirely fictional, but more a reflection of societal practices.

Note

1. Thalaikoothal, literally meaning “showering”, is the traditional practice of senicide (killing of the elderly) or involuntary euthanasia, by their own family members, observed in some parts of the southern districts of Tamil Nadu. Typically, the elderly person is given an extensive oil-bath early in the morning and subsequently made to drink glasses of tender coconut water which results in renal failure, high fever, fits, and death within a day or two. This technique may also involve a head massage with cold water, which may lower body temperature sufficiently to cause heart failure. Alternative methods involve force feeding cow's milk while plugging the nose, causing breathing difficulties (the "milk therapy") or the use of poisons.

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The Morality Of Machines

Meryl Thomas & Ipshita Rhea Peters • FYBA

This paper seeks to evaluate the humanistic nature of sentient robots in science fiction, to analyse the clash between the moral and detrimental facets of their personality, and to explore how similar they are to their human creators.

Thou shall not make a machine to counterfeit human mind."- Frank Herbert.

Robots have been one of the forerunning elements of science fiction, ever since Isaac Asimov introduced the word 'robotics' into the English language (Stanford University). They have been used in various manifestations of this genre such as films, comics & videogames. This paper seeks to analyse the humanistic aspect of robots in science fiction, and explores the altercation between the sentient natures of such machines and their destructive capabilities.

In his short story "Runaround"(1942), Asimov stated for the first time the three laws of robotics:

> "1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm. 2. A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law. 3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Laws" (Asimov).

In *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979), the robot Marvin is seen displaying the inherently human emotion of depression, which forms the basis of his character. Originally built as a failed prototype of the Sirius Cybernetics Corporation's Genuine People Personalities technology, he suffers from bouts of depression and boredom, blaming it on his vast intellect, for which any task seems minuscule. Hence, Marvin was constructed to portray depression, which makes him essentially more 'humane' than the typical robot. In one instance from the movie, Marvin is quoted saying, "Pardon me for breathing, which I never do anyway so I don't know why I bother to say it, oh God, I'm so depressed... Here's another one of those self-satisfied doors. Life! Don't talk to me about life."(Adams) Marvin remains a memorable character from the series primarily due to his comical dialogues, which greatly differ from the metallic-sounding, clunky communication one would expect from an android.

Johnny 5 from the movie *Short Circuit* (1986) demonstrates the most basic human instincts of both attempting to quench his thirst for knowledge or as he puts forth 'input, more input' (*Short Circuit*) as well as defending his mortality. Governed by a sense of free will, he attempts to satiate his curiosity by asking for more information which he acquires via various mediums. His curious nature resonates with the fundamental nature of humanity; from the most primitive societies to the most progressive ones, the propelling force of advancement has remained the pursuit for answers and better technology. Following through with the very same principle, Johnny accustoms himself to his surroundings. He also discovers the concept of mortality when he accidentally crushes a grasshopper, killing it. Stephanie tells him that it can't be 'reassembled' leading him to realise that being captured by NOVA, his creators, would mean 'disassembling' or ultimately death for him. Johnny, in order to elude captivity, takes off and goes to the extent of hatching an elaborate plan to fake his own death by placing a duplicate of himself in the line of fire. While on the run, an exchange between the robot & his creator Newton Crosby takes place, highlighting Johnny's ability to process the repercussions of his actions and think individually:

> Newton Crosby: Why did you disobey your programme?

> Number 5: Programme say to kill, to disassemble, to make dead. Number 5 cannot.
> Newton Crosby: Why "cannot"?
> Number 5: Is wrong! Newton Crosby, PhD not know this?
> Newton Crosby: Of course I know it's wrong to kill, but who told you?
> Number 5: I told me (*Short Circuit*).

Johnny's reference to 'I' is indicative of his humanistic ability to reason morally, emphasising the development of the concept of self-awareness and individualism, debunking the notion that robots are bound to the limitations of their programming. Through this process he also christens himself Johnny 5.

Robots have also been depicted as possessing emotional and compassionate capacities as in the case of Waste Allocation Load Lifter Earth-class (Wall- E) from Pixar's film *Wall-E*, the last of his kind left behind to clean up Planet Earth. Owing to centuries of solitude and carrying out the monotonous task of contracting garbage into cubes, his little encounters with new objects and rodents have played a principal role in the development of his personality. He begins furnishing his home with these strange objects, attempting to dissect them or at times simply enjoy their aesthetics. His experiences coupled with his fondness for a clip from *Hello Dolly!* make him yearn for a partner with whom he can hold hands and fall in love. When EVE arrives on earth from the spaceship Axiom he persistently tries to win her over and eventually influenced by Wall-E she too begins displaying human emotions of anger, laughter, joy & ultimately love. Eve symbolises the biblical Eve as she becomes the first female robot on earth in centuries as well as a partner to the lonesome Wall-E.

Tom Jacobs quotes author Rod Dreher, who opines, "As humanity became more technologically sophisticated, the film argues, [people] became ever more divorced from nature, and their own nature" (Jacobs). The salvation of humanity is ultimately due to the intervention of dysfunctional robots; technology itself goes back to what makes us really human, in order to help us solve our problems. Like human beings, the robots are affected and impacted by one another and their experiences. Each one, while responding to the other's actions and stimuli, is constantly evolving. Wall-E and Eve are together credited with not only inspiring mankind's homecoming but also as role models for the restoration of oneness amongst the humans.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are those robots considered the opposite of humane, to the point of evolving into entirely destructive forces. In the *Marvel Comics* series, Dr. Henry Pym, a biochemist using his own thought and memory engrams[1], is responsible for the creation of Ultron, an Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) system that eventually surpasses the brilliance of its creator, rebels and upgrades itself to a humanoid. The purpose of Ultron's creation was to help in maintaining peaceful ties the world over. However, upon analysing the situations globally, he realises that humanity is the problem to be eradicated, and begins his mission to exterminate mankind. During one of his attempts to take over the world, he addresses humanity:

> "Though you ultimately failed as a species, you should not be ashamed of what you've accomplished. You've done much with your limited capacity, but ultimately you were too greedy and too frail to ever last in the

environment you've created. I've studied your literature and pop culture... You've fantasized about this day. And now it is here. Your Doomsday" *(Avengers: Age of Ultron*).

Ultron's vision for mankind is one where humans cease to exist; instead, the planet is dominated by Ultron-bots that he controls in thought and action. His evolution theory supports the advanced AI minds capable of following orders and acting homogenously, over humans, whom he views as driven by individualism & avarice. Total dominance is Ultron's solution for peace and prosperity on Earth.

Analogously, Hal-9000 is a sentient robot in *2001: A Space Odyssey*(1968), who controls most of the operations on the spacecraft Discovery One. Supposedly incapable of error, this robot appears to have human emotions; however, the truth of the matter is merely speculated. When an argument arises aboard the spacecraft, Hal is found to be in error, but he insists that it was the humans who were mistaken. This robot, that was built to make sure the mission is completed successfully, is convinced that only human error stands in his way, and attempts to murder the crew members in order to prevent them from negating his instructions. Film critic Roger Ebert wrote that Hal, as the supposedly perfect computer, behaves in the most human fashion of all of the characters (Ebert). Hal behaves in this uniquely deleterious manner not due to a change in his wiring, but because his programming is so thorough that it drives him to extreme lengths to accomplish his mission. Considering 'humane' to be a synonym of magnanimous, the robot is seen acting in the most inhumane manner, showing negligible regard for human life, and making decisions against what he considers to be 'human error.'

The debate about whether such robots can be considered human is as much a philosophical question as it is a scientific one. The struggle to bridge the gap between our actual self and our ideal self is akin to the endeavours made by robots. Is the term 'humane' a description of all aspects of human behaviour, or merely the ones we would like to see attributed to ourselves? Occasionally the humane nature of robots has been attributed to its programming such as Marvin, while at other times, this behaviour is the result of a programming malfunction, as in the case of Johnny 5. Robots can be humane, demonstrating magnanimity and benevolence as well as negative human emotions like aggression, abusiveness, control and hatred. Any creation of man will, inevitably, emulate him, no matter the justification.

Note

1. Engram: a hypothetical change in neural tissue postulated in order to account for persistence of memory— also called memory trace. (Merriam-Webster)

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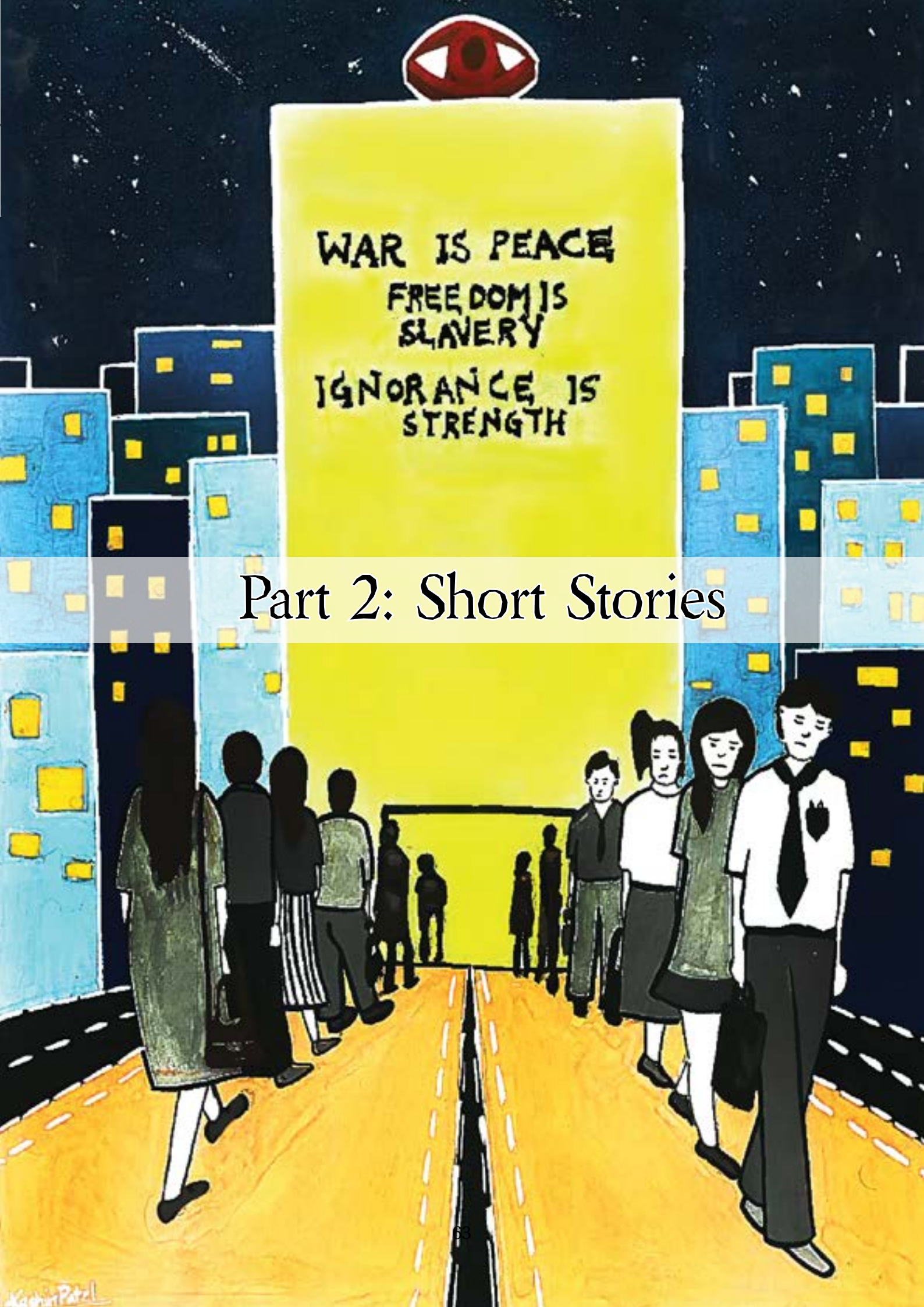

Part 2: Short Stories

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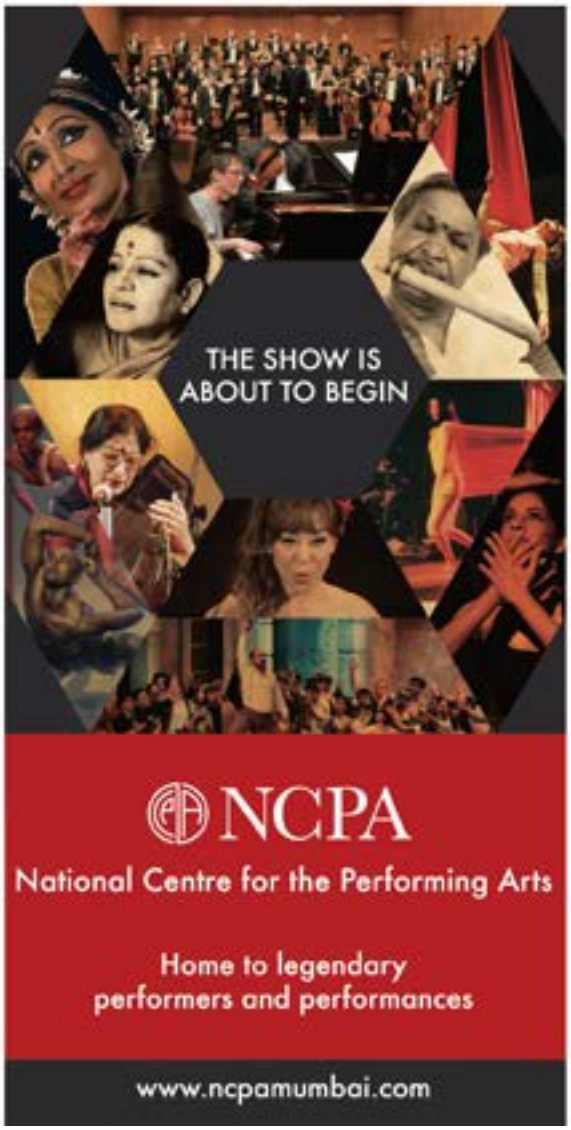

The Eye of Atlantis

Sunaina Menezes • FYBA

Millions of years ago, on the mythical island of Atlantis, a mother is forced to confront her worst nightmare. In a society ruled by Artificial Intelligence, privacy is denied and parents must raise their children in a world devoid of emotions.

Night fell, enveloping everything in darkness. The entire city slept, except for one seemingly miraculous building, which ran itself smoothly with no human in sight. This sleek futuristic building, in the heart of the city hummed with electricity, sparks whirling and fizzing around it. On the topmost floor, a bright blue electronic iris pulsed like its very own digital heartbeat, constantly rotating and surveying the computer screens around it. There was something eerie about the eye, something mildly unsettling. Although it appeared to be an exact replica of a human eye, it lacked the warmth of one. And not once did this bright blue digital eye blink.

The city was a neural network of seemingly alive, criss-crossing signals. A philosopher might describe it as being caught in a web of technology. The air around was heavy with invisible, intangible information - ready to be collected, stored, categorized, but never discarded. Every breath taken could be measured, timed and analysed. All this information was captured by the immortal, indestructible "Web" and fed to the metallic building.

Meanwhile, the screens around the huge digital eye depicted live images of deserted streets, shopping malls as silent as graveyards, empty offices, and focused on each and every sleeping citizen of the city.

A hundred images flashed by every millisecond.

Most of the population seemed to sleep as if they were dead. The only sign that they were, in fact, asleep, was their constant rhythmic breathing and the steady beating of their hearts. As such, the city was performing perfectly. It was currently in what the Eye called "sleep mode."

However, a few were restless. They tossed and turned in their beds. Some muttered incoherently while others battled nightmares. Still more dreamed of unfinished chores and of fleeting half-formed memories. Dreaming, the eye knew, was also a normal feature of Night time, but it just could not accept this. Dreams, it believed, merely served to contaminate the essence of sleep.

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It was 9,000 BC, the dawn of the Neolithic age. Agriculture was rapidly gaining popularity and the rest of the world had just discovered the art of pottery. Meanwhile, suspended in the Atlantic Ocean, the isolated, ill-fated island of Atlantis was legendary for its scientific and technological superiority. Amidst a primitive world of mud and clay, the people of Atlantis had discovered a curious new plaything - Artificial Intelligence.

If an observer had chanced a glance at it from space, the island-city of Atlantis would have stood out as a stark contrast to the rest of the Earth. Nestled in blue waters, it greatly resembled the crown of a futuristic alien Queen. The buildings were ultra-modern, thin and tall with razor-sharp edges, made solely of metal and glass.

Atlantis had its own sovereign government – a Council of Elders, nominated by the people which ensured the smooth functioning of the city, and protected it from external threats. When these objectives had been met, the Council tried to gain the favour of the public. They focused on the people's next great ambition - the thirst for information. Knowledge, the people believed, was a tool that could be wielded to accelerate the rate of progress, and to create a workable Utopia.

"Artificial intelligence"was all the rage at that time and the Council took the popular decision of creating a self-aware "Eye," programmed to oversee the city happenings and to suggest measures to improve them. After all, the Council members were merely human. What the city needed was a far superior, unbiased third-party opinion.

The Eye had access to a vast storehouse of information, amassed over generations. It monitored every inch of the city minute-by-minute through a sophisticated surveillance system. Every morning, the Council of Elders would arrive at the building to consult with it.

Over time, the Council members noticed that the Eye always gave sound advice. It never erred or attempted to deceive them, even to serve its self-interest. These were traits, after all, characteristic of the human race. Power could not corrupt the Eye since it was a machine, programmed to ensure the betterment of the people. Powerful and all-knowing, it had never been wrong. Soon, it attained an almost God-like status in Atlantis, and the people ceased to question its advice.

One evening, the Eye had its greatest breakthrough yet. On the following ill-fated morning, a curious scene was enacted on the topmost floor. Around the digital Eye, the Council of Elders sat enrobed in white. It was a sight both distinctly futuristic and yet, hauntingly primitive. The Eye was the idol, and mankind was once again worshipping a God that it had created.

That morning, the Eye outlined its latest strategy, which would accelerate progress and bring peace and order to Atlantis. With facts, figures and irrefutable logic it defended its arguments.

The Council's assent to this proposition would have repercussions on generations to come.

All wars, disturbances, unrest and crime were by-products of human emotion. Irrational, counter-productive decisions were taken every day, mainly because they had been influenced by emotions such as love, hope, or fear. The entire city was overrun, infected with this monstrous, faceless disease termed "feelings". What was the point of possessing superior reasoning, the Eye wondered, if all decisions and actions were ultimately ruled by feelings?

The factors that hindered the city's progress were the prevalence of crime and the citizens' clouded judgement. The root cause of all this, the Eye rationalized, was the over-emotional parenting process. Parents in Atlantis raised their children with an abundance of love and affection, which then handicapped them for later life. The children also grew accustomed to bouts of anger and despair. Added to this were the two universal evils – fear and hope. The Eye felt the need to eradicate these human weaknesses as they served no constructive purpose. It had already been established that computers were far superior to humans, primarily because they had no need for emotions. When the population of this island city was presented with these arguments, they could not help but agree.

The Council was easily swayed and harsh laws were put in place to punish those who did not respect the new, emotionless parent-child relationship. Anyone attempting to restrict the progress of Atlantis was to be treated as a criminal. Rebelling parents were kept in isolation.

Parents, the eye concluded had limited use. It was educational institutions that taught children what they needed to know and peer groups that taught them appropriate behaviour. Parents only ensured that their children were kept healthy and safe,and that could be done by the state. However, the Eye could not deny that most children appeared to treat their parents as role-models and often mimicked their behaviour. Thus, parents would play an integral part in this new system. They would mould their children into members of this newly advanced human race.

Thirty-two-year-old Quinn Argyris always found herself in a minority. As a single mother from a lower socioeconomic class, she had to work twice as hard to ensure that her nine-year-old son could benefit from the privileges enjoyed by all other young boys. However, seeing him grow up to be intelligent, affectionate and full of life, she realised that her efforts had paid off. She

once again found herself in a minority. She was sceptical, to say the least, of the Eye's latest theory, a feeling not shared by others. However, a majority vote was taken, and her scepticism accounted for nothing.

The Eye, Quinn felt, was omnipresent, watching her every move. If she ever forgot this, there were posters of the Eye on every street, which also seemed to be watching her. "For a Better Future," the posters promised.

When the Eye first outlined its idea, Quinn felt sorry for it, since it had never known love or trust. It had no one to teach it that there was a complicated grey area between right and wrong, which one had to feel one's way through. Now, almost a year later, Quinn had no pity, only anger. She had been taken to isolation ten times that year, with a gun to her head.

Initially, her young son had found it difficult to adjust to a world where he could not hug his mother, where she did not beam with pride when he brought back good grades, and where she could not tell him funny stories. He knew that his mother was forced to behave in a certain way, but this did nothing to lessen the sting of betrayal. Soon however, the boy learnt to adapt to this changing society, like all little children do. It was his mother who continued to find it difficult to adjust.

Quinn had several lapses of judgement that year when she gave in to her weakness. When times were particularly hard, she wanted to remind her son just how much she loved him. She was put into solitary confinement for all the "crimes" she had committed. Every time she returned, she found her son changed. He was slowly growing numb. She wondered whether her absence was damaging him more than her distant, closed-off presence.

Quinn decided to conform to the rules. She would be a model citizen. Her son seemed a stranger, living in her house, but at least she got a chance to talk to him and to watch him grow up. One night, on his tenth birthday, she began to recall the boy he used to be. He had always been a shy boy, but he use to giggle when she chased him around the house. He had a vivid imagination and believed that his father was an explorer, who had gone to discover the wilder parts of the Earth. Quinn remembered all these memories as she tossed and turned in her sleep.

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Meanwhile, in the heart of the city, the Eye continued its nightly watch of those it called 'outlaws'. It analysed Quinn's restless sleep pattern. When morning came, it told the council, quite matter-of-factly, that something needed to be done about Quinn Argyris. She would never truly accept the new nature of their world and was thus, a threat to their well-earned peace. When the curious Council of Elders questioned how it was so sure about this, the Eye simply said, "She still dreams every night."

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It was the dawn of a new era. Crime rates had fallen overnight and a new class of humans had been created, ones that were rational and productive members of society. They were never angry or afraid. In short, they were "perfect."

However, it was a world denied of privacy, where technology was worshipped. Relationships had crumbled and children had lost their individuality. Emotions had been eradicated and lives were now pre-decided. Everything that made humans human was lost – their ability to feel, the celebration of their memories and of beauty in the world.

Quinn thought about how the Eye's version of Utopia was her idea of a nightmare. She agreed that sometimes emotions such as fear and despair were dangerous, but so much strength was gained from them. Emotions such as love and hope could destroy a person, but also give him a reason to live. What the children in Atlantis were doing could not be called "living." It was mere "existence". How would her son bring his child up, in this world with no room for mistakes?

Quinn was drowning in cynicism, pain and suffering. Would it be better to just give in to society? In the midst of all her crazed thoughts, she was suddenly struck by a terrible realisation – she had failed as a mother. She had failed to protect her only son from the evils of society.

At that moment, the door opened and she

heard the footsteps of her son. She felt the cold muzzle of a gun pressed to the back of her head. With horror, she realised that it was her ten-year-old son, acting for the betterment of society. Her eyes pleaded with the boy whom she would always think of as innocent. But a damaged boy looked back, his eyes devoid of any warmth. She silently struggled to convey her remorse and love to him. The boy failed to comprehend. He pulled the trigger.

Quinn's last thoughts were of an alternate reality. Her son would not have been robbed of his childhood, and she of her motherhood, if only they had lived in a different time.

Far below, in the depths of the ocean, the ground began to rumble in pain.

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From mud to stone to bronze to iron, during the course of a million years, the known world has witnessed empires rising, and crumbling into oblivion. However, we have still not attained the superiority of Atlantis.

It is now the year 2015, and the island city of Atlantis has been reduced to just a myth. It is recounted in a hundred different ways but always ends on the same note. The mysterious island submerged, vanishing overnight.

In our frantic race to embrace technology, we unknowingly tread the same path. The hourglass has been turned over. History will repeat itself.

Illusions

Amruta Khandekar • FYBA

Iris, an amateur spy from Zone 3, is sent to Zone 1 armed with one, and only one, command: to unearth the cause of Zone 14's sudden devastation. As she infiltrates Zone 1's control room, she comes upon a revelation that leaves her scarred for life.

Her communicator beeped softly as she landed, agile as a cat after hauling herself in through the topmost window of Tower A. She cursed herself for not having put it on vibrate mode and turned her head around rapidly, checking if someone had been alerted by the sound. Getting to the Main Control Room of Zone 1 without being detected was of immense importance, and as she was in enemy territory, even the slightest mistake could result in her being spotted and executed. Not that she cared much about her own safety; Zone 3's security would suffer due to her carelessness, and the very thought made her shudder.

This time, though, luck was on her side. Relieved no one had noticed, she hid herself behind a round, sturdy pillar before pulling out her communicator. The message was from Chief Norman, the head of her Zone.

Protector Iris, specify location stat.

Iris's fingers raced over the device as she quickly typed back a reply saying that she'd successfully infiltrated the enemy territory. She shut off the communicator for her own safety, and cautiously made her way to the staircase, clutching the small revolver at her waist. She was incredibly good for an amateur spy. Breaking into a rival Zone was not child's play; you first had to find out a way of getting past the barricade of huge stone walls surrounding the Zone and then skilfully make your way past the horde of Protectors guarding the Zone at each and every junction especially at night, undetected. Now that she was inside Zone 1, she had to try her best to gain access to their control room and search for any information regarding the sudden and unexplained devastation of Zone 14, her Zone's ally, as were Chief Norman's orders.

She stopped short on spotting a fully armed Protector scaling the whole length of the corridor. Quick as lightening, she ducked behind another pillar, reaching for a handgun strapped to the other side of her waist. This one though, was full of darts injected with a potion to render people unconscious. She arranged her elegant stature in the correct position, as was taught to her in her first year of Protector training, and without any trace of hesitation or fear, pulled the trigger.

It was a clean shot.

The Protector collapsed onto the floor, instantly knocked out, as the dart lodged itself right in the sensitive area below his jaw. Without wasting another second, Iris raced down the staircase and ducked behind a wall, resting her back against it. Beads of sweat rolled down her forehead, dampening the few strands of her fair hair that'd escaped her tightly wound pigtail. Almost mechanically, she reached for the electrolyte fluid in her bag. She had only just realised how thirsty she had gotten since the mission began. As she drank, she wondered again, for the umpteenth time in her life, why the Zones were constantly at war with each other. Her history teachers had explained to her class in vivid detail, how different the world was exactly one thousand years ago. Instead of Zones, there were continents, countries, and cities. Human population was at its peak, and people lived happily with their families in houses and apartments, rather than individually, in small cramped rooms as they did in the Zonal Towers. However, like all things, this happiness was not long lasting. Very soon, human greed and the struggle to enhance technology in order to ease human labour had its toll on nature.

Then came the Apocalypse; the earth was mercilessly ravaged by continual

earthquakes, storms, volcanic eruptions and other products of global warming, as well as, incessant and uncontrolled violence, wiping out a major portion of humanity. After years of suffering, the surviving humans finally united, and on the bleak, grey, almost treeless landscape emerged a unified 'Zone', made up of a few thousand people.

All was fine until the Zone's leaders began to find themselves continually in disagreement with one another. After the disagreements turned into acts of violence and intense rivalry, the leaders separated, taking a group of supporters with them, and the unified 'Zone' split into exactly fifteen different Zones, each accommodating around two hundred people housed in gigantic and highly fortified metallic towers surrounded by massive stone walls for added protection. Since then, the Zones had always been wary of each other, and had constantly fought over the increasingly depleting resources, making and breaking alliance pacts as each strived to be better than the rest.

Iris asked herself why they couldn't put aside their monstrous need for power and focus on surviving in harmony instead.

She shook off her utopian thought as quickly as it came to her mind. None of it mattered now. All that she was concerned about at the moment was completing her mission, returning to Zone 3 and earning the admiration and respect of her Zone. Only then would she have begun to do what she'd been told to do since she was a child: work for her Zone till her dying breath.

After satisfying her thirst, she brought out the handgun again and began to cautiously follow another stone wall leading to the Main Control Room.

To break into the room, she had to fight four Protectors. From the corner of her eye, she noticed the glint of their silver medallions. "I've never fought Silver Trooper Protectors," she thought. But she did it, albeit at the cost of a flesh wound on her right arm. After swiftly dressing up the wound with the medical pack she had brought with her, she wasted no time in completing the next step towards her mission: hacking into Zone 1's File Record Machine. Hacking into FRMs had been another important component of her five year training course, and she did it in mere seconds. She slid her fingers across the screen, scrolling up, as her sharp emerald eyes scanned the document titles on a page in one fluid motion. Suddenly, she drew back her hand. The document title her eyes were now focused on read **Experiment X0X: Human Enhancement Formula.**

She hesitated for a second. She had only heard rumours. Could it really be true?

As she read, her breath caught in her throat; she had to stifle a gasp. Apparently, exactly a year ago, Zone 1 and Zone 14, former allies, had collaborated to perform several experiments to decipher the way in which they could augment the deteriorating human population. Humans were becoming increasingly sterile due to radioactive expulsions from disasters such as volcanic explosions and many fell prey to diseases and fatal infections, leading to a further drop in numbers. After several months of experiments conducted in confidentiality, the scientists finally created a formula intended to boost human stamina, increase fertility and cause a growth spurt among humans, strengthen their immune system, and enhance human intellectual capacity, thus making them better equipped to survive in extremely harsh climatic conditions. Zone 14 insisted that the formula be introduced in the other Zones, in order to help them increase their populations as well. However, Zone 1 was persistent on using the formula only for their own benefit, which led to violent clashes between the two Zones, and ultimately, Zone 14's split from the project.

From then on, they were sworn enemies.

Zone 1 then proceeded with the injection of the formula into precisely ten people, who were captive spies from other Zones and traitors from their own. However it unexpectedly led to the injected people morphing into hideous green mutants. Protectors were summoned instantly, and somehow, the monsters were restrained and kept in highly secured and guarded captivity in the Inventory of Zone 1. The enhancement study was shut down while Zone 1 decided what was to be done with the mutants. However, nine of the mutants managed to break out of captivity and flee

the Zone owing to their superior intellect.

It suddenly dawned on her. The nine runaway mutants must have fled as far as they could from Zone 1, hidden themselves in the rocky thicket near Zone 14, and reproduced over the three months, forming an army large enough to take Zone 14 by surprise and destroy it

With shaky legs, she walked to the door of the Inventory, which was right next to the Control Room. She couldn't resist the temptation of seeing for herself the captive mutant, if it hadn't been executed yet. Barging straight in, she knocked out the three stunned scientists working peacefully inside with her dart gun and walked around, among rows and rows of tubes and flasks filled with strange, bubbly chemicals, and peculiar machines making creepy humming sounds. Finally, she chanced upon a huge metallic cylinder, which had small holes drilled around it at the top. A huge board put up next to it read 'CAUTION; EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. KEPT FOR EXPERIMENTAL PURPOSES ONLY.' A chill ran down her spine as she caught sight of a stand with a red lever located nearby. She contemplated this decision for a while before finally pulling the lever with all her might. The lever triggered a mechanism which caused the metallic cylinder to lift and slide aside, exposing a cylindrical cage with electrified bars. However, it was the thing inside the cage that caused Iris to freeze right where she stood.

The creature was almost eight feet tall, with thick, scaly skin, a repulsive shade of green and beady black eyes that now glared at her furiously. It had heavy black talons on both its hands and feet, and long black spikes protruding out of its slightly hunched back. She could see that its thin, agile body was designed for running, and when the creature opened its mouth she saw, to her horror, razor sharp incisors which could cut into flesh as easily as metal could cut through stone. Strangely, for such a frightening creature, it made no sound at all. That explained why no one could detect its presence.

As she stood, her senses numbed by the sight of the hideous mutant, a sudden realization hit her.

The monster in front of her was not a product of the experiment.

No, it was a product of innate human greed, insensitivity and the desire to be superior to others.

These three vices had led to the Apocalypse, and the same had led to the creation of the repulsive, dangerous creature whose species had ruthlessly wreaked havoc on thousands of her own. With a shaky hand, she drew out her communicator. Her Zone must be informed about the mutants; considering the short distance between Zone 3 and Zone 14, it would not take long for the mutants to attack Zone 3 as well. Perhaps… hopefully… there was a chance that the remaining Zones would let go of their mutual hatred and face the mutants as a unified force. They would have a fighting chance then.

As she switched on the communicator, it beeped before she could even type a message. It was a message from her best friend and fellow Protector Liz.

Iris. Mutants. Approaching Zone 3. Goodbye.

The communicator crashed to the ground with a loud thud. Her knees gave way, and she sank to the floor, gazing aimlessly into the distance. Her head swam, and she felt dizzy. In that hopeless moment, she realized painfully that her entire life had been nothing but an illusion. Her Zone's prosperity had been more important to her than her own life; she'd been so proud on being selected for training in the Protector Squad of her Zone where, as she now realized, they'd taught her nothing but extreme ethnocentrism and a lack of tolerance for other Zones. She was the product of a system that trained humans to kill their own kind. She'd been nothing but a pawn for her Zone, a cog in the machine that furthered the latter's inhuman goals. Alas, it was too late now; the mutants were probably strong enough to destroy all the Zones and wipe out every trace of humanity from the planet. Or was it already lost through the actions of warriors like herself?

Nothing could be done now. Her only hope was that the new dominant species would be cleverer than her own and do their best to protect each other rather than revelling in each other's suffering and destruction.

The Unveiling

Sarjan Sheth • SYBMS

After an unprecedented year of devastating earthquakes globally, nations have disintegrated and society has crumbled. In this chaos, our protagonist stumbles upon an extraordinary discovery. After long last, the last item in Pandora's Box has been found: hope. What comes of it?

Sorry, passing through, excuse me Mr. Ansari, passing through," muttered Jaymin Patel as he pushed through a score of people in a vain bid to get to his office on time, already late for the usual Monday review meeting. He knew he shouldn't have postponed making the PowerPoint presentation until the night before it was due, but procrastination had been his best friend for as long as he had known. He took a left and stumbled, surprised as to why he was feeling slightly dizzy. He regained his balance, apologised to the person next to him and kept walking, only to stumble again and fall down, face-forward. The screams and the periodic tilting of the corridor in front of him confirmed his diagnosis: an earthquake had struck. He stood, and taking support of the railing, waited for the tremors to subside. They didn't. The shaking worsened, and Jaymin watched in horror as the building opposite to the now-cracking glass windows of his office block collapse like a stack of cards: the Bandra-Kurla Complex, one of the sturdiest structures in the city, had started breaking apart.

He lost his balance as the railing came undone. Suddenly, he was airborne: a huge chunk of concrete had broken off beneath his feet and he was falling into the bowels of the building. He didn't have very far to go; a car in the underground car park broke his fall and quite a few of his ribs. The shaking still hadn't stopped; the sound of the earth rumbling drowned out the shouts of panic and the frantic ringing of sirens. Jaymin was surprised at his lack of pain, and tried to move. He couldn't. He looked down at this torso, and the sight of the car's windshield stuck six inches into his torso accompanied the immense pain that he felt now. The last thing he remembered before blacking out was how violently the world was moving around him and how similar it was to his first carousel ride at the age of six. He didn't recall closing his eyes as the ringing silence engulfed him.

*****

14 months later

It was the silence that woke him up. Over the months, he thought he would get used to sleeping without the constant medley of honking cars, whistling kettles and other loud, regular sounds that indicated dense inhabitation common to the bustling metropolis that used to be Mumbai. Yet sometimes, the pressing silence roused him from his disturbed sleep.

The headlines screeched out statistics in his dreams. The average earthquake lasted 30-40 seconds; the earthquake that hit, later christened 'Clotho', the first of the three spindle-spinning, white-robed incarnations of destiny in Greek mythology known as the Fates, had lasted for over 7 minutes, with its epicentre just north of Delhi. Two other earthquakes had struck over the next two days: one deep in the Pacific, which set off devastating tsunamis that sank most of Japan and the coastal regions of Australia and the Americas, and the third struck Turkey, near the ancient city of Antioch, was the first earthquake in history to reach a 10 on the moment magnitude scale. Within minutes, it had levelled most of Europe, North Africa and Central Asia. Many governments collapsed immediately; estimates recorded millions dead and about a third of the total population homeless. Satellite imagery confirmed large, permanent changes in the Earth's geography. News channels quickly caught on to the name the 'Three

Fates', and how the fates had, in the form of these earthquakes, brought about such a big calamity. Seismologists warned of aftershocks crossing 8 on the Richter scale, and very active volcanic activity along the Ring of Fire region in the Pacific.

Mankind struggled, but continued to survive over the next few months. The media, for once, talked about the silver lining: How much of Africa had remained largely undamaged, and Brazil and the US mainland were taking in refugees from around the world. No one, however, anticipated the most basic of human vices, one that would silently drag down and end civilisation as the world knew it: the greed for power.

Jaymin shook his head to chase out the last shreds of sleep and dreams. He could not recall listening to any news; it was probably his subconscious mind that recorded it while he was knocked out under pain medications and relayed this information in his dreams. He stretched his arms, and flinched slightly as his brain registered the pain from his chest. He looked down at the wound running across his torso that culminated at his shattered breastbone. The scar would heal, but never fade. He took his breakfast – canned beans and painkillers -- with an outdated newspaper. Next, he checked his rations and came to the conclusion that they would barely last the week. He sighed, and got dressed to go outside. 'Dressing to go out' meant a very different thing now, than what it used to be. He took his knife, a huge stainless steel piece of cutlery that might have once been used by his local butcher. He contemplated taking the pistol, but let it be. He talked to old Mrs. Sharma while walking down the stairs. It was clear the latter did not have too long to live: without treatment, her pneumonia had spread throughout her lungs and every breath she took ended in a hacking cough. He was saddened thinking of the building without her: a population of 4 felt even lonelier.

Once on the street, he reverted to his usual practice of looking down while walking. As always, he went back to thinking about taking his first steps six months after his injury. Most patients and doctors had been forced to vacate the hospital because of a lack of supplies and the ever-increasing raids by hungry and hurt survivors. A doctor hurriedly told him the basics about the exercises he'd have to carry out. It had to be done by him: trained physio professionals and clinics were long since a thing of the past. In flashes, he remembered stumbling, falling and making it to his home after three days, only to see it buried under the skeleton of another building. He wandered in the suburbs without a permanent shelter for two months. News came in bits and pieces, and it was impossible to separate fact from fiction. Most channels of communication were rendered useless, and public infrastructure had been reduced to dust. As he laboured towards a destination unknown, only the rubble, debris and broken bodies were his faithful companions: constantly by his side and unrelenting.

Movies, books and video games had purported 'The Apocalypse' coming in a sudden, all-encompassing meteor shower or a tidal wave that sank the world, or a zombie outbreak that rapidly spread across the globe. In reality, the apocalypse came on quietly like an uninvited guest who had long overstayed his welcome. Over the months, humankind folded upon itself as survival instinct took over and organised society disintegrated. Africa, once a hotbed of slavery, became the master as she waged war over the rest of the world, and eventually turned upon herself. The Americas had long since been segmented into bickering factions. Mankind now survived in isolated pockets without a trace of humanity. Money lost its value, and basic necessities were fought for. Medicines and weapons were exchanged for food and shelter, and the barter often ended in death. Intact shops and markets were the new oases, with survivors inhabiting and defending them from others with their lives. The landscape had been converted into a shattered dystopia; bleak and without hope.

Back in the present, Jaymin walked on. Constantly stepping over rubble and bodies, he climbed a few pieces of debris of what the broken billboard claimed was the New Colaba Supermarket to survey what was left of the locality, and to smell the faint breeze of the sea on his face. He smiled as he heard the

distant sounds of waves lapping against the shore. At least some things never changed.

He was immediately shaken out of his reverie at the sound of running feet. He briefly spotted a face, battered and bruised, before it disappeared around a bend. He fingered his knife restlessly, and quietly took the same turn. He stopped dead in his tracks as he observed the scene before him. For the umpteenth time, he repeated those words to himself: it wasn't easy being an apocalypse survivor.

His instincts, hardened after months of scavenging and fighting for survival, spotted the food first: on shelves in a small store that was, for the most part intact. There was a rhythmic noise coming from the general direction of the store, repeated over regular intervals that sounded vaguely like hammering. He took in the swarm of people surrounding the store, and gripped his knife a little tighter. There were easily thirty of them, and each seemed to be holding a different sort of tool. He looked around and spotted the straggler he had seen earlier enter the store. Expecting all hell to break loose, Jaymin watched with bated breath as the young boy picked a can of Pepsi and a loaf of bread. The boy calmly walked out and sat on what was once a balcony and started eating. Jaymin blinked, confused. Then, it hit him. The store wasn't intact, it was being rebuilt.

Since the earthquakes, erecting a new building had become a very rare phenomenon. Even if the tools and equipment were available, the basic impediment was a lack of human cooperation. Hence it was with utter surprise that Jaymin watched the people in front of him get to work. He saw what he had earlier missed: bamboo poles and lengths of rope, shovels and hammers shaped the store into something new. Still wary, he started walking forward with his knife held out. As always, the eyes of the first person he had killed, a woman who tried had tried to shoot him in the chaos of an attack on a pharmacy swam before his eyes. Half blinded by pain and aching for morphine, Jaymin had reacted in self-defence; watching as the life slowly ebbed away from her eyes. Pushing that thought away, Jaymin started forward and stepped into view.

All at once, a hush fell, and everyone looked at him. Jaymin stopped dead in his tracks. One of the men came up to him, knocked the knife out of his hand and handed him a shovel. Jaymin didn't react. "Take the shovel, and help us dig," he said, with a polished accent. Finally, Jaymin found his voice. "This is a trap. This HAS to be a trap. Why else will you band together in a futile attempt to build?" The man could understand the bafflement on Jaymin's face. Unless it was a trusted person, most encounters between strangers ended violently. The man put down the spade and said, "Do you know what this is?" he asked, spreading his arms and indicating all the people working. "THIS is the apocalypse. It is a Greek word which means 'uncovering' or 'unveiling'. What has happened was unfortunate, but perhaps it was necessary. The Earth was balking under the weight of the population. Here, we have a chance to rebuild. Care to join, Jaymin?"

The man extended his hand. Jaymin thought for a while, still not completely at ease, and cast his eyes around one more time. His eyes met the young boy's gaze. He smiled through the bread he was eating. Jaymin felt his lips widen in an expression he long since thought he had forgone. As he shook the man's hand, he realised he hadn't said his name for the person opposite him to know it. Before he could ask him, the man smiled and said, "Kalki. Call me Kalki."*

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43 years later

The young girl let go of her mother's hand and rushed to the tree, hugging its huge trunk. The tree stood at the very end of a beautifully planned park. Inscribed in the bark of the tree were names of the people who had founded the settlement which had served as a cradle for the rebirth of society. The girl shrieked with laughter as she pointed at the twelfth name: Jaymin Patel. As the girl danced around the tree, the mother stood and took in the silence. It was said that the ashes of those whose names were written were scattered around the tree; the air itself felt a little heavier with the remnants

of those ashes. For the mother, this was her place of worship. She cocked her head to one side and watched her little girl play. Sometime later, she took her child's hand, touched the twelfth name reverently and made to leave. The girl was firing question after question to no one in particular. The ashes in the air shuddered slightly when she asked, "I wonder though, Ma. What do the dead dream about?"

**The 10th avatar of Vishnu is believed to be Kalki, a man atop a winged white horse with a drawn blazing sword. He is the harbinger of end times, and ends the Kali Yuga (Dark Age) and ushers in the Satya Yuga (Era of Truth).*

Ithaka 2015 presents...

The Sketches

The Art of Being a Nobody by Sasha Mahuli

Dreams, desires and ambition. What does one need to be saved from? Or are we all beyond saving ?
They say it takes courage to be a Nobody...
...Or does it ?

Show Timings: 2:30 to 3 PM on December 2nd.

The Coronation by Veydaant Khanna

"The Coronation," at face value, is about exactly what the title suggests.
Upon delving a little deeper, however, it talks about ideas and how far these ideas drive us.
Two heirs. Two questions. One crown.

Show Timings: 3 to 3:30 PM on December 2nd.

The Corridors of the Soul by Saanchi Saxena

The Rational and Emotional selves of Vincent Van Gogh are perpetually battling for control.
When his brother forces Vincent to make a life-altering choice, the war intensifies.

Show Timings: 5 to 5:30 PM on December 2nd.

Wit by Kamya Nair

Mrs Iyer is battling cancer. Cancer complicates her life in a way John Donne's sonnets never could. They give her power to contemplate life, and not in the abstract.
What will she choose?
Complexity or kindness?
Life or death?

Show Timings: 5:30 to 6 PM on December 2nd.

The Plays

Penthouse Legend by Diksha Nawany

Karen Andre is on trial for the murder of her lover Bjorn Faulkner. As the mystery of this millionaire tycoon's death unfolds in the courtroom, it is up to the audience to decide the fate of our protagonist. On a deeper level, this play is the dramatic embodiment of Ayn Rand's systematic philosophy that she called Objectivism.

Show Timings: 3 to 4 PM on November 30th,
5 to 6 PM on December 1st.

Art by Meghana Telang

The purchase of a white (?) painting leads to conflict between middle-aged Irfan, Shonali and Zach. The three old friends must choose their sides in the argument, and make clear where their loyalties lie.

Show Timings: 5 to 6 PM on November 30th,
7 to 8 PM on December 2nd.

Catalina by Sroojana Iyer

Catalina is a historical drama about the life and marriage of Catalina of Spain, the first wife of King Henry VIII of England. The play follows Katherine of Aragon, formerly Catalina, as she faces and overcomes political obstacles to claim her rightful place as the Queen of England.

Show Timings: 7 to 8 PM on November 30th,
3 to 4 PM on December 1st.

Ithaka '15: Schedule

Day 1: Monday, 30th November

3 - 4 PM	Penthouse Legend
5 - 6 PM	Art
7 - 8 PM	Catalina

Day 2: Tuesday, 1st December

3 - 4 PM	Catalina
5 - 6 PM	Penthouse Legend

Day 3: Wednesday, 2nd December

2:30 - 3 PM	The Art of Being a Nobody
3 - 3:30 PM	The Coronation
5 - 5:30 PM	The Corridors of the Soul
5:30 - 6 PM	Wit
7 - 8 PM	Art

TYBA English, Class of 2016