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# Genre Controversy: Human Universality or Plagiarism in the Dystopian Genre?

Taylor V. Kingston

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Honors Thesis

Taylor V. Kingston

Department: English and Psychology

Advisor: John P. McCombe, Ph.D.

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## Abstract

In a fusion of behavioral psychology, evolutionary psychology, and literary analysis, this thesis considers the possibility that human nature dictates the types of rhetoric utilized in any given genre. Operant conditioning emerged as the governing device in a case study of the dystopian genre since readers must be made to associate fear or hope with particular government structures. Implicitly then, literature is molded into its genres by the human desires addressed by that genre's reigning themes. This "mold" seems to have created a strain of novels within the dystopian genre that are so similar there have been accusations of plagiarism. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *Brave New World* and *Anthem* are considered to be uncannily similar to the Russian predecessor, *We*. Looking at how plagiarism is a shallow explanation for the similarities between these novels leads to a compelling conversation about the relationship between human universality and genre structures.

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## Table of Contents

Abstract	Title Page
Human Universality	2
Nature Trumps Nurture in the Dystopian Genre	3
A Dystopian Plagiarism Epidemic?	10
Utopia vs. Dystopia	17
The Conditioning of Unsuspecting Readers	20
Dystopian Reaction Chains	29
Works Cited	35

Society attacks early, when the individual is helpless. It enslaves him almost before he has tasted freedom. The “ologies” will tell you how it’s done. Theology calls it building a conscience or developing a spirit of selflessness. Psychology calls it the growth of the superego. Considering how long society has been at it, you’d expect a better job. But the campaigns have been badly planned and the victory has never been secured.

--B. F. Skinner, *Walden Two*

The victory of which Skinner speaks is the construction of a place not so unlike Airstrip One, the World State, the One State, the World Council, or so many other “utopian” societies featured throughout dystopian literature. It is ruled by a singular being. Men and women relinquish their knowledge of good and evil to the being and take direction on how to live their lives. These ideal societies are also not unlike Eden, and just as in Eden, such “victories” do not last long; something in the human spirit yearns for autonomy, exploration, control. That a utopian society has been thus far unattainable is a sad fact to Skinner, father of operant conditioning and a believer that the human restlessness that generates chaos can be programmed out of men and women with mere punishment and reward. Seemingly, dystopian authors rejoice in the rebellious spirit of man since their novels gravely warn against attempting to construct utopias. Dystopian authors have even done their best to contribute to the failure of all utopian campaigns thus far.

And yet. Dystopian authors must use a powerful form of manipulation to deter masses of people from trying to rebuild an Eden and regain that state of peace for which we long more every time our fellow man exercises free will with disastrous results. An ironic suggestion is posed in this thesis that dystopian writers utilize Skinner’s own method of mind control, operant conditioning, to convince readers to guard the sovereignty of their thoughts. However, in order to make operant conditioning function

properly, the writers must put something at stake in their stories that is of great importance to the reader. They, therefore, endanger the universally valued human faculties of family, sex, knowledge, and freedom. Targeting these universal human faculties using the common structure of operant conditioning ultimately causes a controversially similar plot structure to be employed throughout dystopian literature. These controversial similarities are especially salient in four twentieth century dystopias that serve as the focal point of this study: *We*, *Brave New World*, *Anthem*, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

### **Human Universality**

Voyager I is currently the farthest probe from Earth that humans have launched into space. On this vessel, NASA included a gold record containing what the team lead by Carl Sagan deemed the most vital information for representing the human condition in the event the record would be found by other intelligent life. There were 27 songs from multiple languages included. Among them is a little known blues song, “Dark Was the Night, Cold Was the Ground,” by Blind Willie Johnson. It was chosen specifically to demonstrate the emotion of loneliness. One member of Sagan’s song selection committee, Timothy Ferris, stated, “Johnson’s song concerns a situation he faced many times, nightfall with no place to sleep. Since humans appeared on Earth, the shroud of night has yet to fall without touching a man or woman in the same plight” (Ferris qtd. in Nelson). Implicitly then, distressful situations such as loneliness allow one to understand the essence of what it means to be human if it is deemed sufficient to represent human nature to the rest of the cosmos. If this is so, can inducing a sense of hopelessness in readers also be sufficient to tap into the pool of human universality? An intriguing

dynamic between human universality and plot repetition in the dystopian genre demonstrates the affirmative.

In dystopias, totalitarian regimes take away free will to impose a utopian, false sense of peace. Thereby, dystopian writers distress readers in order to persuade them to actively avoid the worst-case-scenario societies the writers depict. The NASA scientists suggest that distress draws out human universals, but dystopian writers explore the inverse; they fashion plots contingent upon the ability of human universals to draw out distress. In order to distress readers, the writers must target and endanger universal components of the self that humans cherish most. In evolutionary terms, humans cherish those things which promote the continuation of life, both individually and collectively. Humans instinctively want to protect faculties such as knowledge and freedom that permit them to protect themselves and faculties such as sex and family that allow them to promote their species via reproduction. It is partly due to the necessity of targeting these specific universals that a common plot structure has developed within the dystopian genre.

### **Nature Trumps Nurture in the Dystopian Genre**

All texts from all genres interweave to create a greater “Text” that is shaped into repeating forms by a master mold. According to Porter, this phenomenon is called intertextuality, and these molds are called “discourse communities” – professional, personal and public communities that dictate what writers must write to reach people of a particular culture. Porter states, “The approved channels we can call ‘forums.’ Each forum has a distinct history and rules governing appropriateness to which members are obliged to adhere. These rules may be more or less apparent, more or less

institutionalized, more or less specific to each community” (39). Porter postulates that these channels are created socially by the dictates of specific discourse communities, but the types of communities he gives as example exist on a relatively small scale: the alumni of the University of Michigan, Magnavox employees, members of the Porter family (41.) While the concept of “intertextuality” would frame the idea of a plagiarism epidemic in the dystopian genre as a permissible sharing of ideas, intertextuality still doesn’t seem to account for the extreme similarities that span across the quantity of and diverse locales of the writers in the genre. The dystopian writers who developed similar plots were targeting vastly different audiences and were themselves not parts of the same communities. It is plausible, therefore, that rather than social “forums,” biological “tracks” in the human mind account for the similarities spanning the dystopian genre.

A relatively new field of thought called biopoetics suggests that human universals brought about through Darwin’s natural selection have molded templates for literary form. Evolutionary psychologist Brett Cooke states, “Since there is no distinction between a gene and its copy, a gene could be said to benefit itself in the body of its host’s progeny. As a result, we are prompted to engage in sex and love our children, whether or not we understand why. And we like to read about affairs of the heart” (1). Humans also seek knowledge because it is humans’ greatest arsenal in the animal world. It is the best means by which one is able to continue life. However, these explanations about universality may seem to suggest that the inclinations towards writing about knowledge, freedom, sex, and family are so strong that every literary genre should have as many similar novels as the dystopian genre.

The dystopian genre is not the only genre with intertextuality so prevalent it could



be called plagiarism. Take for instance the Arthurian genre in which stories about King Arthur, Guinevere, Lancelot and the other Knights of the Round Table have been retold by countless authors over the centuries. In many cases, the story is barely altered aside from the addition of a small subplot. And yet, in this genre, intertextuality is celebrated. Why? I posit that it is because it is widely recognized that this tale is not the work of an individual, even though it did take a singular mind to first conceive of King Arthur's persona. This tale belongs to humankind, and it would have been written in some form, perhaps by a different name, had Geoffrey of Monmouth (the probable creator of the Arthurian legend) never laid quill to partridge. Something about the story of destiny, valor, and of love that is not meant to exist but must so deeply connects with humans that our species keeps calling for an encore telling. To analyze the specific pattern in the Arthurian tale that aligns with psychological "tracks" in the human mind would be the question of another thesis altogether. However, we can learn two important things from the Arthurian genre: one, we can learn what it is about the Arthurian genre that makes intertextuality okay whereas it inspires cries of plagiarism in the dystopian genre; and two, we can see that there are *several* "tracks" in the human mind and understand that the best writers have an instinct about how to fit their stories into those preexisting grooves.

The dystopian template is molded to address the specific human needs for sex, family, knowledge and freedom by the common method these writers use to structure their texts: operant conditioning. Operant conditioning modifies behavior by giving positive and negative consequences as a result of specific behaviors. Behaviors and their consequences become associated, and targets of such conditioning adjust their behaviors to avoid negative and obtain positive consequences. How then can dystopian writers

condition readers who are seemingly passive receivers of stories? Readers exercise few visible behaviors beyond turning pages and readjusting cramping limbs; the behavior of a reader exists in the mind. As we read, we follow the journeys of protagonists, adopting their perspectives in order to gauge how the tension between their lives and our realities feels.

We ask ourselves, “Do I wish that my life were like the protagonist’s?” In dystopias, the answer is “no.” Why? Because dystopian writers want it to be. Recall, it is the authors’ goal to dissuade readers from allowing the worst-case-scenario societies featured to become realities. Dystopian writers condition readers by punishing their protagonists for undesirable behaviors, and the readers express the same emotions that should be felt by the protagonist. To this, anyone who has ever cried into a book can attest. Particularly, anyone who cried over the conclusion of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), when Winston says he loves Big Brother, should know that they have unknowingly been conditioned to hate the form of government that allowed the villain to win.

“Big Brother is watching” is a term that has pervaded Western culture since George Orwell published *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and made the mustachioed dictator a symbol of government oppression. Tongue in cheek, the phrase is spoken today, for example, by citizens referencing the surveillance at the BMV. With less confident smiles, many equate Big Brother with the suited agents granted rights by the Patriot Act. Of course, this is far from the only iconic phrase to transcend fiction. The greatness of literature is that it routinely implants such beads of perspiration on the brows of naïve or apathetic citizens. However, dystopian writers have devised a particularly useful

formula for cultivating a healthy political climate, a climate wrought with critique and criticism. Readers vicariously experience a novel's worth of oppression and ultimately, emerge from the denouement gasping for less centralized government and literally *conditioned* to fight for it.

The form of conditioning that inspires dystopian readers to fight for freedom is operant conditioning, developed by B.F. Skinner. Skinner states, "When the environment changes, it is operant conditioning that causes organisms to develop new behaviours so that they may continue to receive reinforcers such as food, water, sex and absence of physical harm (501). Dystopian readers are conditioned to believe that their environments have changed; they believe a new threat has been posed to the continuation of their species. The effective reinforcers named by Skinner (food, water, sex and the absence of physical harm) must then be those items that are threatened in dystopias. Though each dystopia has its own evils in society which it aims to expose, the various authors must threaten these same critical items to condition readers most successfully. Animals will be motivated to fight or flee when their basic needs are threatened, and humans are the same; unlike animals, however, humans have the intelligence to fear the loss of those faculties that allow them to defend those basic needs. Therefore, dystopian authors threaten humans' right to gather the knowledge that will permit them to be self-sustaining. They also target sex since it is a means to the continuation of the species. In a separate category, humans fear the loss of that which makes life worth living. Therefore, dystopias also threaten family and the right of self-expression. It will be argued here that the emphasis on these four human universals caused the creation of a somewhat controversial dystopian template.

The controversy that has emerged within the genre suggests that the similarities between some of its novels are brought about by an idea-level form of plagiarism. Many scholars have suggested that the novels *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *Brave New World*, and *Anthem* all have plot structures remarkably similar to *We*, a dystopia written by the Russian writer and Bolshevik dissident Yevgeny Zamyatin. These four dystopias have similar protagonists who rebel against society; either passion for knowledge or romantic passion revives the humanity of each. Each of these novels also features authoritarian regimes that restrict free will by preventing nuclear families, sexual freedom, self-expression, and knowledge-gathering. Figure 1 below illustrates the nature of the similarities in these four categories.

**Figure 1: The Dystopian Track**

	KNOWLEDGE	FAMILY	LOVE/SEX	SELF-EXPRESSION
WE (1924)	-lobotomy undoes the gathering of knowledge of rebellion D-503 has done	-D-503, O-90 and R-13 form a dysfunctional sort of family/love triangle	-I-330 seduces D-503, persuades him to rebel -O-90 deemed too short to have kids	-D-503's dreaming is considered a sickness because it is indicative of the mental illness of having a soul -D-503 keeps a journal
BRAVE NEW WORLD (1932)	-thinking is suppressed through the taking of the hallucinogen, soma -isolation from other cultures	-children raised in hatcheries and conditioning centers	-outlawed natural reproduction -orgies and free love desensitize lovers -Malthusian belts that hold contraception	-caste formation through genetic engineering, a.k.a. Bokanovsky's Process -citizens conditioned to think of alone-time as a waste of time -Bernard ostracized for his differences from his caste
ANTHEM (1938)	-Equality 7-2521 longs to be a scholar but is a street-sweeper -rediscovers electricity and is tortured for it	-raised away from parents in Home of the Infants -illegal to prefer one person over another	-relations with Liberty 5-3000, calling her "Golden One" and running away together	-writing is forbidden, but Equality keeps a journal -"I" or "EGO" is the Unspeakable Word
NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR (1949)	-Ministry of Truth destroys historical knowledge -thought-crime -IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH motto	-citizens have no families or romantic partners	-sex is regulated so that people submit to the ministry when it is their turn to have to reproduce -Winston's affair with Julia -spirit broken when he betrays Julia	-Big Brother's constant surveillance prevents fostering of individualism -Thought-crime if one shows signs of thinking for the self -Winston keeps a journal as a rebellion that leads to his demise

Considering the cause of these parallel features, plagiarism is where the mind naturally turns first, but there is strong evidence against this theory. Perhaps instead, dystopian writers must employ uncannily similar themes because they must fit their stories into the psychological tracks in the human mind corresponding to fear in order to condition readers to share the authors' political views. However, before explaining this theory in depth, it is worthwhile to explore the extent of the similarities among notable dystopias and the theory of a plagiarism epidemic as a way of addressing the prevailing counterargument.

### **A Dystopian Plagiarism Epidemic?**

How are the similarities between the texts profound enough to warrant an accusation of plagiarism? It is best to begin with a synopsis of the prototype, *We*, in order to progress to a comparison of it and the three other novels in question. A skeletal outline is as follows: in the wake of a world-wide revolution, society has been overtaken by a totalitarian regime run by the "Benefactor." The regime, called the "One-State," restricts individual freedoms for the sake of collective harmony. D-503 is the male protagonist and narrator. The book is his secret journal, and in his first entries, he speaks as a perfectly conditioned drone. He eats and sleeps according to the schedules mandated in the "Tablet" and even has sex only after obtaining the proper "pink slip." He has no family because children are reared by the state. However, D-503 begins to feel, dream, and love after falling into a relationship with a woman who defies the laws and introduces him to an underground revolution. She takes him beyond the "Green Wall" which separates the civilized One-State from the savage outside. However, they are apprehended by the Guardians and lobotomized to treat the "soul illness" with which they

are diagnosed. The novel ends with D-503 indifferently watching his lover being tortured for information about the revolution.

The Englishmen who wrote *Brave New World* (1932) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) accused each other of stealing elements from *We* (1924), so it is logical to begin with a juxtaposition of these works. Orwell and Huxley created futuristic worlds that arise from revolution, each creating terminology that parallels Zamyatin's. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Zamyatin's Benefactor is Orwell's "Big Brother," the One-State is "Airstrip One," and the land beyond the Green Wall is the "Golden Country." Additionally, the novel unfolds almost identically with the protagonist, Winston Smith, meeting a girl, Julia, who introduces him to the revolutionaries. Orwell's novel ends with the government discovering Winston's and Julia's insurrection and torturing Winston until he no longer cares about Julia but says he truly loves Big Brother. In *Brave New World*, Zamyatin's Benefactor is "the Ford," children are reared by the state to prevent nuclear families from forming as an autonomous entity, and sex is regulated by encouraging orgies that prevent lovers from feeling intimacy. Bernard is the equivalent to Zamyatin's D-503 and Orwell's Winston Smith; each has a physical insecurity and a dangerous awareness of his own humanity that separates him from his fellow citizens. In *Brave New World*, such people are referred to as thick-skinned "rhinoceroses" since "they don't respond properly to conditioning" (88).

A review of *We* that Orwell wrote for the *London Tribune* three years before his own book was published is offered by scholars as evidence that he plagiarized his Russian forerunner. In the review, he stated, "This is a book to look out for when an English version appears." However, Orwell had been forced to read Zamyatin's book in

French because the English version was only available in the United States, so it is possible that he was referring to the appearance of a translated copy in England. Regardless, the review divulges that Orwell was aware of the potential audience for such a book. Ironically, it was in that same review that Orwell states, “Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* must be partly derived from *We*. Both books deal with the rebellion of the primitive human spirit against a rationalized, mechanized, painless world, and both stories are supposed to take place about six hundred years hence.” According to a conversation documented in a biography of Zamyatin, Huxley denied having read *We* when speaking to Zamyatin in 1923 (Shane 140). Zamyatin accepted Huxley’s alibi, replying “Certain ideas are in the stormy air we breathe” (Lefevre 8). This attitude has been shared by scholars who suggest that the template copied by dystopian writers was actually created by the revolutionary atmosphere of the first half of the twentieth century. It is a suggestion frequently made when discussing Zamyatin and his relationship to Ayn Rand.

Rand was attending Petrograd University in the Soviet Union at a time when Zamyatin was at his most influential, and it is her novel, *Anthem* (1938), that shares the most direct similarities with *We* (Saint-Andre 1). As Russian literature scholar Zina Gimpelevich states, “There are too many coincidences in the philosophical approaches to the literature of Zamyatin and Rand to consider them as merely accidental. Zamyatin’s influence on Rand is evident in every chapter of *Anthem*” (13). Rand chose to call her characters by numbers, created a male protagonist who narrated the story via his journal, decided the protagonist would find his individuality through love with a woman, ended with the discovery of a free land beyond the walls of the city, alluded to Prometheus, and



emphasized the significance of the words “we” and “I” – all just like Zamyatin. The last line of the novel has the protagonist and his lover discovering a library full of books, and in one of those books, the sacred word – ‘EGO’ – suggesting that life fulfillment lies in the acknowledgement of the self rather than the whole or the “we” (Rand 105).

There is no evidence proving that Rand read *We*, but it is likely she read it based on a letter she sent her agent in which she writes, “I have watched very carefully all the literature on new Russia that has appeared in English” (Berliner 4). (It is more probable that Rand would have been able to obtain an English copy than Orwell since she moved to the United States in 1926, and *We* was translated into English in the United States in 1924.) Regarding the body of evidence supposedly incriminating Rand as a plagiarist, Peter Saint-Andre states, “These similarities may provide evidence that Rand was aware of and influenced by Zamyatin, or merely that both thinkers breathed the same intellectual air in post-Revolutionary Russia” (3). Saint-Andre’s statement about Rand mirrors the statement Zamyatin made about Huxley and “the stormy air we breathe;” this represents a second theory that a shared socialization in Communism-threatened Europe was the impetus for these dystopian writers to create similar worst-case-scenario societies. This theory, however, is an oversimplification no more tenable than the plagiarism theory. There are multiple other novels in the dystopian genre that follow the dystopian template in question, stretching from *The Time Machine* (1909) to the *Divergent* (2011.) What is more, several of the novels in this vein were written in a place and time in which Communism and revolution were no longer menacing threats, weakening the theory that dystopian novels are similar due to shared political influences.

The following text features are listed to serve as criteria for determining which dystopian novels also fall nicely into the same vein as the four featured in the plagiarism controversy. The similarity of the regimes is one issue. Each regime restricts its citizens through conditioning achieved by the thought-level censorship of ideas, restriction of love through the regulation of sex, and the communal rearing of children to prevent the formation of nuclear families. A second issue is the similarity between the protagonists, always the common person (usually male) who becomes a dissident after a reawakening of the soul. Dystopian plots that implement the above traits include, but are not limited to, *The Machine Stops* (1909), *Player Piano* (1952), *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), *The Children of Men* (1992), *The Giver* (1993), *The House of the Scorpion* (2005), *Uglies* (2005), *The Hunger Games* (2008), and *Divergent* (2011.) The likelihood that this many successful and capable writers were of the mentality to directly copy their predecessors is unlikely, and because the novels span decades, the suggestion that dystopian writers are alike due to a common renunciation of Communism is also weakened.

The idea that the works of Orwell, Huxley and Rand were inspired by the revolutions of the first half of the twentieth century is still a tempting explanation since the timelines match up. Indeed, history books focusing on this time tend to read more like dystopian literature due to Stalin's dispersion of Socialism and Hitler's capitalization on the impressionability of the German people after their country took the blame for WWI. Stalin became the face of Socialism, forming a freedom-restricting government in the wake of revolutions that transpired in Russia after the abolition of serfdom and WWI caused an economic crisis (Beehler 32). Under his control, political opposition was

squelched in the Great Purges, atheism was promoted over religion with the clergy often being sent to labor camps or tortured, censorship prevented the spread of competing ideas, and even travel was not permitted without government approval. All of these tactics speak to the effort to control the socialization of citizens by preventing anything from priming their consciousness that was not in accordance with government ideals. This is pertinent to explore because events in Russia unfolded in the same sequence as in the dystopian template being studied here: war leads to revolution that causes a dictatorship which results in the conditioning of the masses. While this may seem to support the argument that the novels are based on historical events, the consistency of this pattern in historical events other than the Bolshevik Revolution suggests that history is just more evidence that specific human universals are stirred by the worst-case-scenario of war and revolution.

As an example demonstrating this point, a detailed comparison of World War II and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* will show how Orwell's novel aligns even more closely with the specifics of Hitler's regime than Stalin's. Joseph Goebbels was given the title of Minister of Propaganda and National Enlightenment by the Fuhrer. This upbeat-sounding position entailed two things: first, to prevent the people of Germany from receiving any negative messages about the Nazi Party from media, film, education or books; and second, to inundate the German people with messages that portrayed Hitler as their savior. Looking at *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the similarities are unmistakable. Isolating the population so that citizens were socialized only by the government's messaging was the method used both in actuality and in fiction. Technology was utilized in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* so that the government could speak to citizens through their televisions, just as

Goebbels set up massive speakers in every public arena and mandated that radios should be made highly inexpensive so that every household would have a way to hear Hitler's speeches. In order to produce any form of art or publication in Nazi Germany, one had to belong to the Nazi Party, which would censor every work that threatened their mission. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, art and writing were simply forbidden.

One may explain the similarities between Nazi Germany and *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* by saying Orwell was inspired to publish his novel in 1949 by the events of WWII which had so recently posed a threat to his homeland of Britain. However, Orwell later claimed in his essay, "Why I Write," that he based the novel on his fear that Socialism would overtake democracy in Britain and that his greatest worry about WWII was that Britain would be forced to become a Socialist state in order to unite strongly enough against Hitler (Orwell 3). Orwell even refers to the form of government in *Airstrip One* as IngSoc, English Socialism (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 7). Connections can be drawn repeatedly between dystopian works and history or dystopian works and their predecessors, but the connections that can be made diverge in too many directions to say that correlation means causation, or in this case, inspiration.

It wasn't a dystopian writer but Hitler who coined the term for the psychological control necessary to create a totalitarian government: "weltanschauungskrieg" or "worldview warfare" (Evans). The idea is to condition the people of a society to a standard way of thinking and submitting. It was in order to depict this method of control that dystopian writers had to learn how to employ it themselves. Researcher Brett Cooke states, "Only those groups of traits (i.e. persons and texts) which win reproductive opportunity and/or our attention will persist and be able to shape the future. All of the

works that influence what we now read were able to do what every viable work of art must accomplish: attract readers” (5). In order to attract readers, dystopian writers focus on those things which Darwinism says humans biologically care about the most: the freedom to gain and wield knowledge to promote the survival of genes within their own bodies and within the bodies of their heirs. Dystopian authors use operant conditioning to teach readers to associate experiments regarding the structure of society with the imminent loss of security. They teach the association between the utopian worlds with the eradication of free will. It may even be said that dystopian authors such as Zamyatin, Orwell, Huxley and Rand suggest the Garden of Eden, where Eve was not free to eat from a tree representative of knowledge, was the prototypical dystopia.

### **Utopia vs. Dystopia**

The essential difference between a utopia and a dystopia is that utopias glorify the engineering of societies in which individualism is made secondary to communalism, whereas dystopias warn against it. Utopian writers see all of the problems in society as we know it, whereas dystopian writers see problems with the utopian alternative (Richter 4). Scholar Robert Baker includes a chart in his book which details the characteristics of “utopian” society in one column and that of “non-utopian” society (society as we know it) in another. In the utopian column are traits such as “socialism, world state, limited sexuality, science and urbanization.” In the non-utopian column are terms like “emotion, individualism, class hierarchy, capitalism and religion” (Baker 29). The latter represents a world that controls humans’ natural predispositions for self-promotion. The former equalizes opportunity by taking away human choice through conditioning. In fact, B.F. Skinner himself wrote a utopia called *Walden Two* in which he crafted his ideal society

around his theory that behavior could be controlled. In *Walden Two*, “Freedom was not free will, but rather having the requisite repertoires and opportunities for attaining valued outcomes” (Altus and Morris). This is a pattern seen throughout utopian literature tracing back to Plato’s *Republic* in which the communal rearing of children and restriction of sex to only specific times of the year is promoted as genuinely idyllic (Plato 149-189).

Dystopias address the supposed flaws in utopian ideology. Aldous Huxley specifically identified his goal as such. According to Robert Baker, “In a 1962 letter to Christopher Collins, Huxley wrote that Wells’ [utopian] *Men Like Gods*, “annoyed me to the point of planning a parody, but when I started writing I found the idea of a negative utopia so interesting that I forgot about Wells and launched into *Brave New World*” (25). This statement discredits the idea that *We* was the primary influence for Huxley since he explicitly states he was inspired by H.G. Wells – if, of course, Huxley was being honest. Further support that utopian thought dictates dystopian writing is offered in the article titled “By Underground to Crystal Palace: The Dystopian Eden” in which it is suggested that Yevgeny Zamyatin borrowed his ideas for *We* from an even older antecedent, Dostoevsky’s reworking of the Garden of Eden story (Sicher 1). The Garden of Eden is the ultimate utopia, but Dostoevsky clearly understood the impossibility of returning to such a state in his short story, “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man.” As Sicher explains,

In Dostoevsky’s scheme of things, the church has been superseded by the city-state which continues to employ the same questionable utopian ends to justify similarly ruthless means. Eden is a prison, yet men and women, born free yet everywhere in chains, would not wish to give up the happiness provided by social order. (9)

The phrase “born free yet everywhere in chains” is borrowed from Rousseau’s *The Social Contract* which states that man cannot return to the ideal “state of nature” because he has grown accustomed to a life of reliance upon his fellow man. Dostoevsky connects thoughts from *The Social Contract* to the Garden of Eden story in order to convey this message that a contractual society is a necessary evil which paradoxically restricts free will while making human prosperity possible. The idea that the government umbrella represents safety is understood by dystopian writers, but they argue that only certain umbrellas are preferable to the rain. For example, Huxley’s *Brave New World* “attempts to examine why there has been so little controversy regarding the Protestant work ethic, which has become the driving force of capitalism, and which has forced human beings to consider idleness the playground or the workshop of the devil” (Myron 12). In this way, Huxley argues that the increasing power of capitalism ought to be checked before a society like the one he depicts results, even though people are hesitant to question the status quo.

In this example, Huxley can be seen as responding to the idea of capitalism as a proposed utopia, but there is even more direct evidence connecting dystopian works with utopias, the Garden of Eden story particularly. In *We*, Zamyatin deliberately alludes to the Garden of Eden when he chose to name the revolution Melphis, derived from Mephistopholes, the devil from German folklore associated with knowledge (Zamyatin 133). Realizing that the dystopian plot structure is actually a sort of satire of the Eden story provides an explanation for the emphasis on sexuality and predominance of male protagonists with moral dilemmas in dystopias. Does this supply a contradictory explanation to the idea that psychological tracks dictate dystopian form? Early on, this

thesis suggested that the dystopian template is caused by the requirements of operant conditioning to exploit the most critical needs and desires of humans in order to persuade them. Now, it may seem it is being argued that dystopias derive their common structure by responding to the older utopian genre. In fact, both arguments are being presented here, but they are not mutually exclusive. The utopian genre works by the same method of drawing out human universals via operant conditioning. However, utopian writers employ the inverse form of conditioning: they positively reinforce readers living in non-totalitarian countries to make them appreciate the utopian world of control, and they positively punish readers living in totalitarian countries to make them fear losing security if their controlling government ever falls. This dynamic will be explained in depth in the next section. Essentially, the conditioning in dystopias and utopias works like this: the nature of the “air the authors breathe” – stormy or otherwise, totalitarian or non-totalitarian – dictates the kind of operant conditioning the authors will employ.

### **The Conditioning of Unsuspecting Readers**

There are four types of operant conditioning: positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, positive punishment, and negative punishment. Two forms are employed by dystopian authors depending on the political climate being experienced by their target audience. Positive punishment is used by those authors writing for peoples not governed by totalitarian regimes, such as Orwell and Huxley whose works were first published in Britain. Positive punishment entails adding undesirable stimuli when targets behave unfavorably in the opinion of the conditioner. A general example of positive punishment is spanking a disobedient child since the pain is being added in response to the disobedience. This method is effective in non-totalitarian societies because readers



typically feel shielded from the unjust, punishing hand of government. In order to make them fear dictatorship and take action to prevent it, readers must be taught how government oppression feels. In non-totalitarian dystopias, as we will refer to this brand, the conditioning is more accurately functioning as *vicarious* positive reinforcement since readers respond to the consequences undergone by protagonists. For this reason, it may be helpful to think of positive punishment as the same kind of dynamic seen with voodoo dolls; the emotional pain felt by readers reaches them even though it is being applied to another entity, in this case, a fictional character. Non-totalitarian dystopias must also end tragically so that readers believe there is no way to escape a dictatorship if it is allowed to take over.

Those authors writing for peoples governed by totalitarian regimes, such as Rand and Zamyatin who wrote for Russians, employ positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement entails adding positive stimuli to targets when they perform actions that are favorable to the conditioner. An example of this is rewarding children with candy for cleaning their rooms. This method is effective in totalitarian societies because the readers will be accustomed to having their rights curtailed by the government; they do not need to be taught to fear but to have the bravery to revolt against the government and win their freedom. Both non-totalitarian and totalitarian dystopias, therefore, share the goal of dissuading readers from allowing totalitarian regimes to reign. Additionally, in non-totalitarian dystopias, the form of conditioning being used is vicarious. In the case of totalitarian dystopias, however, readers experience vicarious positive reinforcement. Instead of thinking of this form of conditioning as voodoo, it is more appropriate to regard it as an infectious smile. A pleasing stimulus (the acquisition of freedom) is gained

by the protagonist in a totalitarian dystopia that makes him/her rejoice, so the reader feels joy and, ultimately, empowerment. Totalitarian dystopias also must end with triumph so the readers believe they will experience success if they attempt to overthrow a totalitarian regime.

The polarized nature of conditioning in dystopias depending on the dystopia's country of origin may seem to come from a biased capitalist mind that views capitalist ideals as the goal and socialist ideals as a ruse to be avoided. In fact, renowned author and politician Noam Chomsky claims that Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is "one of his worst books" because he focused on the "obvious and lax" methods of control employed by totalitarian regimes and failed to expose the supposedly more dangerous form of propaganda present in England and the United States. Chomsky states, "To write about [Western propaganda] would have been important, hard, and serious — and would have earned him the obloquy that attends departure from the rules" (83). This critique illustrates that the Eastern form of government is not the only model that can be satirized dystopically. Several dystopias have focused on Western evils. After all, Huxley's aim in *Brave New World* was to expose the dehumanization of materialism in a capitalistic society; Suzanne Collins did the same in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, as did Scott Westerfield in the *Uglies* series. However, as Chomsky states, the evils of totalitarian governments are more obvious than those of non-totalitarian regimes – even to those living in the regimes. People in non-totalitarian governments may feel dissatisfied with their lives but not blame their governments for their misery since they ostensibly have freedom. Even though a dystopian author writing to an audience living in a non-totalitarian country may be exposing the problems with their own country, they still have

to make explicit the feeling of government oppression by using positive punishment. The authors must make the pain of living in such a society explicit because readers do not realize the degree to which oppression is present in their lives or how easily the amount of oppression could be increased.

Therefore, conditioning is bifurcated in dystopias with positive punishment being used for non-totalitarian audiences and positive reinforcement for totalitarian audiences. Evidence for this polarized conditioning is present in the genre as a whole. In Figure 2 below, the left column shows that dystopias for totalitarian audiences (indicated by country) nearly always employ positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement is indicated by a triumphant ending. Conversely, the right column of Figure 2 shows that dystopias for non-totalitarian audiences (also indicated by country) nearly always employ positive punishment, indicated by a tragic ending. The titles listed are only a representative sample since nearly every title researched aligned with the pattern. Some of the more ambiguous endings may seem to fit in either column; however, triumphant endings were determined by presence of hope at the close. For example, *Anthem* ends with Equality and Liberty escaping the government, finding an abandoned library, and rediscovering the word “I” and the concept of individuality. Therefore, a dystopia would be labeled as having a triumphant/totalitarian ending even if the circumstances were bleak at the close in the event there was an epilogue that assured the reader the rebellion was for the best in the end.

Figure 2

Title	TOTALITARIAN Dystopias		Title	NON-TOTALITARIAN Dystopias	
	Positive Reinforcement			Positive Punishment	
	Country	Novel Ending		Country	Novel Ending
<i>We</i>	Russia	The Green Wall has been destroyed and the rebellion rages on	<i>Nineteen Eighty-Four</i>	England	Winston is tortured until he loves Big Brother
<i>Anthem</i>	Russia	Escape to the Golden Country	<i>Brave New World</i>	England	John hangs himself
<i>The Lunar Trilogy</i>	Poland	Lunar colonists return to Earth and regain lost knowledge	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>	United States	Offred is carried away by the Eyes of God, unsure if they are actually part of the rebellion
<i>War with the Newts</i>	Czechoslovakia	Despite the domination of the newts, it ends with commentary by the author saying humans will reinherit a cleansed earth	<i>A Clockwork Orange</i>	England  United States	Alex sees the error of his ways  Alex sides with the government, once again desensitized to violence
<i>Invitation to a Beheading</i>	Russia	Cincinnatus C. is executed, but he enters a spiritual realm that he learns is the true reality	<i>The Lord of the Flies</i>	England	Many of the children have murdered each other when they are rescued
"The Dream of a Ridiculous Man"	Russia	The narrator awakes from his dream kind, determined to bring about a Golden Era of caring and love	<i>Player Piano</i>	United States	Propaganda-run citizens rebuild the dehumanizing machines despite the success of the rebellion
<i>R.U.R.</i>	Czechoslovakia	Robots Primus and Helena grow feelings and become the new Adam and Eve	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	England	The city is annihilated by the government, but Montag remains with others to rebuild society
<i>The Gilded Age: China 2013</i>	China	Feng and Chen kidnap a government official and make him restore the lost memories	<i>V for Vendetta</i>	England	V dies, and a rebellion begins, but it is chaos at the story's end

An interesting case study is Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*. When it was first published in England, it had a twenty-first chapter that had the protagonist, Alex, realizing the error of his ways and planning to create a nurturing life for himself, complete with a family. This ending breaks the pattern since England is a non-totalitarian society, and we would expect a tragic ending. However, when *A Clockwork Orange* was printed in the United States, it was deemed by the New York publisher that the ending was a "sell out" and that it was unsuitable for the audience (Newman). The twenty-first chapter was omitted, leaving the protagonist the perfect violent protégé of the state. The "happy ending" was also omitted in the film adaptation by the American director, Stanley Kubrick. The instinct of the New York publisher and American director reflect the needs of Americans as non-totalitarian society-members; tragic endings allow people living in societies that tout freedom to fully understand oppression. Another case study from the chart that provides a strong example of an ambiguous ending is *The War of the Newts* in which the newts take over, but the Czechoslovakian readers are assured in the epilogue that the newts will repeat the mistakes of the humans, and the humans will ultimately regain control of a cleansed world, becoming a more enlightened species than they had been before the newt war. Therefore, it is classified as a triumphant ending since the war has a cleansing effect on the dominant species.

The validity of the operant conditioning being used to persuade readers in dystopias has been demonstrated in many psychological studies. Vicarious reinforcement and punishment are components of Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. In Bandura's classic 1961 study, "Transmission of aggression through imitating aggressive models," he showed that children were significantly influenced to enact both verbal and

physical aggression on a “bobo doll” if they witnessed others being violent toward the doll. He used an experimental design summarized as follows:

Subjects were divided into eight experimental groups of six subjects each and a control group consisting of 24 subjects. Half the experimental subjects were exposed to aggressive models and half were exposed to models that were subdued and nonaggressive in their behavior. These groups were further subdivided into male and female subjects. Half the subjects in the aggressive and nonaggressive conditions observed same-sex models, while the remaining subjects in each group viewed models of the opposite sex. The control group had no prior exposure to the adult models and was tested only in the generalization situation. (Bandura 576)

Not only did Bandura find children to be more aggressive if they witnessed aggression, but he also found children to be more likely to imitate the performer if the performer was of the same sex. In dystopias, this finding is significant since authors must work to make their protagonists the proverbial “everyman.” This study is the foundation of Social Learning Theory and led to many other experiments by Bandura and others that extend the findings of the bobo doll experiment. For example, in his 1965 study, “Influence of models' reinforcement contingencies on the acquisition of imitative responses,” Bandura tested how it would affect the children’s behavior towards the doll if they witnessed the aggressive performers being rewarded or punished for their actions. In this study, Bandura found children were deterred from harming the doll if the violent performer was punished. Their violent behavior, however, did not increase if the violent performer was rewarded. This finding has two significant implications for the study of

operant conditioning in dystopias: one, that humans are naturally inclined to imitate behavior with or without reward; and two, that vicarious conditioning as seen in the relationship between protagonists and readers is a psychologically valid phenomenon.

As Bandura's findings suggested, successful vicarious conditioning is contingent upon the degree to which the target relates to the performer. This requirement stipulates the kind of protagonists that dystopian authors must create in order to persuade: the everyman. In *Brave New World*, Huxley uses blushing and pulse to show the humanity of his protagonists. Readers are exposed to two chapters of the unsettling society of the novel before introducing Bernard as someone to whom we can finally relate. When Lenina attempts to refer publicly to plans to have sex with Bernard, "Bernard's pale face flushed," a response odd to the properly conditioned Lenina but very human to the reader (58). The protagonist of *Brave New World* changes to the native, John, about half way through; during his introduction to the reader, he is described as such: "The blood rushed up into the young man's face; he dropped his eyes, raised them again for a moment only to find her still smiling at him" (117). Both Bernard and John are made relatable to the reader with their blushes, representative of the feeling of uncomfortable emotion. This is a prime example of the way human universality arises in distressful situations. Bernard and John are both blushing in response to the sexual forwardness of Lenina, and her character comes to symbolize the culture that has conditioned her so well. Therefore, they blush (show discomfort) in the face of the totalitarian regime (Lenina.) Surfacing blood comes to represent the human spark, the soul, the yearning to be free that is shared by humanity and, more importantly, shared by the protagonist and reader.

Symbols of universal humanity including but not limited to blood are seen in *We*,

*Anthem*, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Interestingly, the first characterization made of D-503, the protagonist of *We*, also refers to the blood rising to the surface of his face. D-503 states, “I write this, and my cheeks are burning. This must be similar to what a woman feels when she first senses within herself the pulse of a new, still tiny, still blind little human being” (2). In this instance, blood is likened to the spark of the soul even more directly than in *Brave New World*, with the reference to the fetus that is the equivalent to the impetus to rebel. Orwell shows the fallibility of Winston Smith in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* on the novel’s first page, “Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way” (1). The chronic medical condition mirrors the chronic struggle of the common man’s life. In *Anthem*, Rand shows Equality 7-2521 to be an “everyman” by ironically having him discuss all the ways he does not fit into the society in which he lives. Equality 7-2521 introduces himself saying, “We are six feet tall, and this is a burden, for there are not many men who are six feet tall” (Rand 2). That familiar feeling of ostracism is relatable even though the average man is not six feet tall. Explaining that he always seemed to have above average intelligence and craved knowledge, he said, “But we loved the Science of Things. We wished to know. We wished to know about all the things which make the earth around us. We asked so many questions that the Teachers forbade it” (Rand 3). The struggle to learn and know is also a universal human desire that makes Equality 7-2521 an everyman capable of vicariously conditioning readers.

The conditioning of dystopian readers cannot be accomplished, however, if the writers do not successfully design and execute a “reaction chain.” A reaction chain is a “natural response that begins with one stimuli and is then continued on by additional



stimuli. These later stimuli are necessary to create the desired response” (Hamilton). The specific reaction chain used by dystopian authors begins when readers form a bond with protagonists as a result of the type of characterization described above. Then, readers follow them on their journeys to overcome or avoid totalitarian oppression. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Brave New World* utilize positive punishment because their authors are from non-totalitarian Britain, whereas *We* and *Anthem* utilize positive reinforcement because their authors are from the totalitarian Soviet Union. The reaction chain that propels the operant conditioning in a dystopia can be traced by following major plot events and analyzing the events’ intended effect on the reader. The reaction chains of the four central novels of the dystopian plagiarism controversy will now be traced to show how operant conditioning functions in each. Tracing these reaction chains will demonstrate that the nature of reaction chains in dystopias is also partly responsible for the common dystopian plot structure.

### **Dystopian Reaction Chains**

In the first step of the reaction chain of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston Smith feels oppressed as a result of limitations to his freedom. The phrase “war is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength” is intended to make the non-totalitarian reader itch to have these backward definitions corrected in Winston’s society of Oceania (Orwell 14.) Therefore, the reader reacts by thinking Winston should revolt to fix the definitions by initiating a rebellion that leads to democracy. Orwell gives readers what they want by having Winston journal heretically, engage in a forbidden romantic relationship with Julia, and seek an underground society of rebels called the Brotherhood. The reader then feels hope. However, everything Orwell has written until this point is to

build the hope of the reader so the fall from hopefulness is more emotionally taxing to the reader when Winston is abducted by MiniLuv. This is the first instance of positive punishment in which a negative stimulus is added in response to reader hope. The reader is saddened but maintains hope, believing that life in a prison or even death would be preferable to living such a constrained existence. All of Part 3 is about applying positive punishments to Winston, and vicariously the reader, in the form of shock torture. Reader hope is ultimately squelched when Winston's will is broken and he declares he wishes they would "do it to Julia" instead (Orwell 224). This positive punishment enacted on the reader ultimately conditions him or her not to have hope when under control of a totalitarian regime. This is important for Orwell's audience to understand as members of non-totalitarian society because it will teach them to prevent totalitarian regimes proactively rather than believing they can overthrow the regime after it has been instituted.

The positive punishment structure functions similarly in *Brave New World*. In the novel, the human desire to control one's own sexuality is curtailed by laws that state "everyone belongs to everyone else" and that make bi-weekly orgies mandatory (Huxley 128). Also, the right to one's own clear mind is taken away via the government prescribed drug, soma. The reader once again thinks "revolt," and it seems that the protagonist Bernard is going to lead a rebellion that defies these inhumane laws, but ultimately uses the power of blackmail just to make himself a sort of celebrity. The reader is positively punished when Huxley demonstrates through Bernard's character that the pressure to fit into this society outweighs ideals that the society is inherently wrong and should be dismantled. However, the reader is given hope again when the second

protagonist, John, refuses to partake in the immorality of the society and chooses to live on an abandoned island instead. However, his story also is wrought with positive punishment since camera crews follow him to the island and make a popular show of the way that he flogs himself to punish himself for his sexual desire to be with Lenina.

Ultimately, the reader is made to believe that one cannot escape from the influence of immorality when John himself and Lenina, the flogging is mimicked by the audience on the shore, and it even develops into an orgy. It is implied when John wakes up and “remember[s] – everything” that he had sex with Lenina, and he hangs himself for also being unable to overcome the pressure to join in the wicked ways of society (Huxley 259). He had attempted to find happiness in seclusion, but this is shown to be impossible. Huxley uses two protagonists to emphasize the inevitability that theoretically good, strong-willed people will be overcome by this government system. Therefore, it is once again the case that readers living in a non-totalitarian government are taught not to hope that there can be any escape from a totalitarian regime. In the following example, it will be demonstrated that the behavior of hoping is actually encouraged in *Anthem* via positive reinforcement.

In Rand’s *Anthem*, people are raised in communal homes and all individuality is suppressed. However, this time, the reader does not think “revolt” but “comply” because the reader is Russian and has been conditioned by living in a totalitarian regime to comply or be punished. However, the protagonist Equality 7-2521 journals secretly and digs a tunnel where he can go and invent things. Time passes and he isn’t caught. Readers begin to see that they are allowed to feel hope, and they are rewarded for the behavior of hoping when Equality discovers electricity and makes a light bulb. He has a forbidden

affair with one called the Golden One as well. Though he is captured and tortured, and The World Council threatens to kill him for presenting his invention, he is able to escape into the Uncharted Forest. The Golden One finds him there, they find the remains of free society, and they vow to found an individualistic race. All of these positive outcomes serve as positive reinforcements that show people living in totalitarian regimes that they should revolt because they will succeed. The message is that even though it is a bumpy path, the outcome will be worth it. The final reaction chain to be explored is in *We*, but its structure is not as simple as that of the other three.

In Zamyatin's *We*, D-503 eats and sleeps according to the schedules mandated in the "Tablet" and has sex only after obtaining the proper "pink slip." He has no family because children are reared by the state. However, the reaction of the reader to these restrictions is complicated because the book first had to be published in America due to the heavy restrictions in Russia during the 1920's, but it was actually intended for Russians. It was the custom "during the darkest years of Russian history...many Russian writers were forced by oppression and reaction to live abroad and to write abroad, yet their writings would reach Russia, as they were intended primarily for the Russian reader and Russian life" (Zilboorg xiii). Because of this issue we see a somewhat ambiguous ending in *We* that could be interpreted as triumphant or tragic. Therefore, it may seem that the pattern of positively reinforcing triumphant endings being used by totalitarian authors is broken by Zamyatin. However, the triumphant ending does prevail because it is positioned last; this is supported by Thorndike's law of recency which states that that which is learned last is remembered best. Also, in the laws of grammar, listed groups are supposed to build to their most important points. Therefore, it seems that Zamyatin

subconsciously recognized his difficult task when writing for both a non-totalitarian and totalitarian audience when he compromised with the ambiguous ending described below.

D-503 is made to feel like more than a cog in the machine of society when a promiscuous woman pursues him for an affair. He is conflicted about whether to go along with her advances or turn her into the authorities, just as the audiences of the novel will be of two different minds at first. However, he chooses to partake in the rebellious behavior and even engages with a group of rebels over the “Green Wall.” This will have the effect of positive reinforcement on hopeful readers, Russian and American alike. D-503 is caught by the Guardians and lobotomized as part of a mass government initiative to quell proletariat rebellions using brain surgery; this outcome would seem to reflect positive punishment as seen in non-totalitarian dystopias; however, the book ends with these lines: “But on the transverse avenue Forty we have succeeded in establishing a temporary Wall of high-voltage waves. And I hope we win. More than that; I am certain we shall win. For Reason must prevail” (Zamyatin 218). Hope wins out. Therefore, *We* can be deemed to fit the pattern of other dystopian literature written by authors from totalitarian governments. An even more significant conclusion can be derived from the ambiguous nature of the ending: *We*’s appeal to people from both totalitarian and non-totalitarian countries could be another reason that the dystopian structure is traced back to Zamyatin. *We* is the ancestor of dystopian literature in that it contains genes for two “species” of dystopia that evolved differently in order to adapt to their own environments.

The theory of reaction chains in dystopias should be tested empirically. Readers should be given tests that gauge their “reactions” as they read a dystopia; these tests would determine how readers’ political philosophies evolve throughout the process of

being conditioned. Emotions ought to be gauged as well to track the degree to which readers vicariously feel the punishments and rewards bestowed upon protagonists. Such research would support the claims of this thesis and also highlight which human universals targeted in dystopian literature are dearest to humanity, and therefore, the best leverage writers can use when persuading.

Targeting human universals such as family, sex, knowledge, and freedom is a requirement needed to create a reaction chain in a dystopia because writers must put matters of great importance at stake to manipulate the hope and fear of readers. Writers seem to sense that this unspoken requirement exists, and they shape their stories in order to meet that requirement. It seems then that what the great writers of every genre accomplish is fitting their stories into a specific track in the human brain. They find new ways to tell old stories because those old stories stumbled into the tracks in our minds and made us feel fulfilled. The way that the dystopian track functions has been explored in the pages of this thesis, but there are so many others: the Arthurian track discussed earlier, the tracks of Cinderella, Pygmalion, Romeo and Juliet, etc. Each one of these stories taps into a different set of universal human desires. It is the job of the author who adapts these stories to expand the story just enough so that the tracks in our minds, our capacities for understanding human nature, can be expanded along with them.

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