

Dystopian literature is intended to awaken the reader to the possibility of a future world, and often acts as commentary on today's society. It infers that the current world will result in chaos, and a dystopia will be the only solution to recreate stability among humanity. However, creating an unfaltering stability demands much from humanity, stripping it of all of its character and resulting in the loss of the individual. The dystopia forgoes exceptional aspects of life in order to fulfill its duty of happiness and stability for the majority. Those in power would argue that it is better for humanity, but I completely disagree. Humanity should be able to grasp its entirety, instead of ripping parts of itself off to maintain calm; life is meant to be felt, not caged-in and tamed. Dystopia throws the art of living in an iron-clad box, and in doing so, loses the following: solitude, true love, truth, knowledge, actual happiness, and the individual.

I. *BRAVE NEW WORLD*: Emphasis on Happiness and Stability

Brave New World depicts a dystopian world in which caste systems define one's role within society; the family unit has been terminated, and superficiality/recreational sex/heavy drug use have become revered. Mustapha Mond, the resident World Controller of Western Europe, explains the history of the World State to a group of boys touring the Hatchery. The Hatchery is where children are born, in a sterile lab rather than naturally from a mother's womb: "No wonder these poor pre-moderns were mad and wicked and miserable. Their world didn't allow them to take things easily, didn't allow them to be sane, virtuous, happy. What with mothers and lovers, what with the prohibitions they were not conditioned to obey, what with the temptations and the lonely remorse's, what with all the diseases and the endless isolating pain, what with the uncertainties and the poverty they were forced to feel strongly. And feeling strongly (and strongly, what was more, in solitude, in hopelessly individual isolation), how could they be stable?" (Huxley 41) This quote compares the past, with present time, and the existing dystopian society. Once, life had been full of struggle, opportunity, and freedom that allowed each human the chance to act on their own accord. The effort of living and the freedom of choice consumed our emotions, causing instability among each individual. In turn, the majority of people were unpredictable. Unpredictability, itself, is too raw to permanently crush disorder, and always leaves room for destruction within society; therefore, limitation of choice is required within a dystopian society to prevent each person from experiencing volatile emotions that risk destroying the stability of society. Maintaining a constant sense of happiness is the key to keeping the machine-like system of a dystopia running. If everyone shared a single attitude of happiness there would be no reason to fight, cry, or rebel; why would you need to since you are already happy? The majority would be completely stable and the dystopia would function as designed.

Stability and happiness are dependent on each other and act as the building blocks of a dystopia. However, instilling happiness in people for the benefit of stability, is an extreme. In *Brave New World* the World State uses *soma* to uplift anyone's mood if, for some odd reason, they are not feeling exceptionally peppy. A commonly used slogan that promotes the usage of *soma*, "One cubic centimeter cures ten gloomy sentiments." Not only are citizens of *Brave New World* sedated, they are conditioned to support a consumerist society, so that the majority has something to occupy their time with that won't endanger stability. How deep within thought and feeling can one get during shopping? If the majority participated in activities that were stimulating mentally, they would begin to notice and the truth would begin to emerge. However, through mindless activities, such as shopping, the threat of truth is removed. Another slogan, in

support of materialism, that has been implanted into the majority's subconscious is, "Ending is better than mending," which is glorifying throwing out the old and encouraging new purchases. To persistently rely on drugs and to have lost the appreciation for the aged in order to provide oneself with a moment of superficial happiness shouldn't be what humanity must do for stability. Shallowness is the only way to achieve a continuous feeling of happiness for stability; true happiness is too rare to experience incessantly. If people are taught that drugs, new objects, and an exciting social life will actually give them happiness, they will believe it and will feel it. A dystopia is the only environment that is willing to sacrifice humanity's depth in order to establish an impenetrable stability.

Embracing the unique qualities of "the individual" and maintaining a stable dystopia are like fire and water. They cannot exist together; whichever substance has a larger quantity will prevail. Dystopias seek to destroy the individual, and replace it with the majority. As individuals form, the majority weakens. Independent thoughts, beliefs, and ideas generate diversity, opposing the rigid structure of the dystopian society. Once an individual has his or her own opinion they are equipped to see through the falsities of their world, to search for knowledge and, in the end, acquire some truth. The individual will exercise his or her own human rights, and in doing so, commit acts of rebellion. If the infectious "disease" of the individual spreads it would mean the downfall of a dystopia. Once again, humanity would be placed at the whims of insecure emotions, no longer a steady rock called "the majority." This notion is evidenced in *Brave New World* when John is sitting with his mother, Linda, who has been knocked out with soma in her last few moments of life. He focuses on loving memories of his mother, but ultimately lapses into spite-filled memories. Even though he feels discomfort and pain, he experiences an undying love and gratitude for his mother, an emotion that sets him apart from the rest of the majority. John was raised outside the "civilized world," inside of a preservation filled with "savages" where he experienced anger, loneliness, agony, hatred, and curiosity. These feelings made his moments of true happiness so much more wonderful because he had something to compare it to. John was equipped with more wisdom than the average dystopian citizen and with the death of his mother, he is outraged with the state of living in the "civilized world." A group of young identical male children are drawn around his dying mother to become desensitized to death—to learn that death isn't something to be afraid of, so that later in life they will not feel any deep emotions towards death. This is another way that a dystopia is able to retain its shallowness of emotion to stay happy and stable. The children gawk at his mother because she is so old and fat, a sight that they have never seen; their reaction infuriates John to the point where he yells at and hits the disgusted children. His mother momentarily escapes the soma coma and begins to say the most used slogan within the dystopia, "Everyone belongs to everyone else." She dies before she can finish. John realizes that his mother never stopped idolizing this dystopia, even when she returned and was shunned by her own kind. Even the soma she believes to be a bit of paradise slowly killed her.

John, on the other hand, finally becomes completely repulsed by this world that only cares about social ranking, physical appearance, and soma; he no longer believes the dream of heaven his mother had told him that the dystopia was. He feels all alone, because nobody else can comprehend the suffering he is undergoing from the death of his mother and the lack of truth around him. In this state he feels as if there is nothing else left to lose, and as he leaves the hospital, he walks into a line of Deltas (the second to lowest class) waiting for their daily drug distribution. His revulsion pushes him to seize the moment to embrace his freedom, which is his act of rebellion, and he begins to create a scene. He screams at the Deltas that, "Soma is a poison

meant to enslave you,” and commands them to “Choose freedom!” He throws the soma out of the window in an attempt to awaken the Deltas to the deeper meanings of life. The moment John grabbed the soma the Deltas rushed him. Disorder ensued due to one individual’s actions. The dystopians ultimate fear had occurred. If the government did not take control quickly, a rebellion against the dystopia could form. John’s attempt to reclaim the roots of humanity and crush the infantile happiness of the majority failed. John was not allowed to leave, because he was a “savage” and too interesting to throw away. He sought for himself some bit of solitude and lived for a short time under the radar of the dystopia, but later, he was discovered. Mobs of people came to watch the spectacle of his solitary life of redemption, bringing with them their lack of honor, discipline, and acceptance. Their presence reminds John that he is trapped in a world that drives him completely mad, resulting in his suicide. The World State manages to extinguish John, fulfilling their duty of killing any dangers to happiness and stability. However, they never managed to quench the flames of the individual within John. His final act, the taking of his life, embraces his own individualism.

These scenes demonstrate that maintaining the majority, which has pushed the individual out of its rightful place, is the most crucial aspect to the success of a dystopian lifestyle. Since the majority would suppress any growing individual, as well as act as the manpower for the dystopian machine. Personal relationships lose their meaning in dystopia. The majority would be in danger if people had special relationships with each other, instead of superficial bonds with everyone else. In order to keep the majority solid, a strong sense of unity for the entire community is necessary. Huxley is describing a world that hungers for physical bonds for everyone, but to spread out the majority within itself would eliminate affection requiring brief relationships. In these unions one partakes in aimless activities: loveless sex, drug abuse, or technological entertainment. The connection of people has lost its substance.

This lack of meaning in relationships goes unnoticed by the majority. Through the aid of conditioning, people are taught to live in a completely communal way, craving company to diminish any voluntary acts of solitude. Since time spent alone gives one the chance to reflect, think, and grow—and this could lead to the search of knowledge, truth, and individuality. The majority’s motto is “Everyone belongs to everyone else” (Huxley 40) encourages sexual promiscuity, social interaction, and serves as a mantra for the majority.

Another way to develop the majority is through conformity. If every person were extremely similar, they could, in a way, be that other person as well. They lack any distinct features that would set them apart, allowing everyone to feel closer as one being. Conditioning, brain washing, and propaganda are the tools used to engrave the same ideologies among the whole, because the root of conformity is in the conformity of opinion. For example, in *Brave New World*, within the “Infant Nurseries- Neo-Pavlovian Conditioning Rooms” eight month old babies are conditioned to hate books and flowers. As the young infants crawl forward and touch the objects they are greeted with electrical shocks and loud noises, training these young Deltas to associate pain with reading and nature (“frivolous” paths that would lead the majority away from the hullabaloo of city living). An additional method of conditioning used to engrain specific values into the majority is called “sleep-teaching.” This procedure involves a recorded voice that repeats specific beliefs that are targeted to each caste; this voice plays nonstop while each caste member sleeps. Through this practice, the majority has unanimous opinions drilled into their subconscious. The unanimous fear of particular objects and complete agreement of principles connects everyone.

II. 1984: Emphasis on conformity of thought and appearance

Orwell's *1984* is a novel about a man (Winston) who tries to cope with his internal individuality within a barren dystopia. Winston considers the bleak reality of his life compared to the Party's supreme vision of a dystopian life and how it still has yet to be accomplished. *"The ideal set up by the Party was something huge, terrible, and glittering -- a world of steel and concrete, of monstrous machines and terrifying weapons -- a nation of warriors and fanatics, marching forward in perfect unity, all thinking the same thoughts and shouting the same slogans, perpetually working, fighting, triumphing, persecuting -- three hundred million people all with the same face"* (Orwell 74). This passage reflects the final goal of the Party—a world filled with identical people, without the slightest distinction from one another. The dystopia would run smoother than it ever had if they were able to create an impenetrable unity, ensuring forever the death of the individual. This "golden" fantasy has yet to become actuality; the dystopia will become even more smothering. By strangling any remaining spirit of humanity, the dystopia is able to realize complete conformity of the majority in order to acquire stability. The following excerpt, from *1984*, clearly discusses the process that the Party used to create conformity of thought: *"The invention of print, however, made it easier to manipulate public opinion, and the film and the radio carried the process further. With the development of television, and the technical advance which made it possible to receive and transmit simultaneously on the same instrument, private life came to an end. Every citizen, or at least every citizen important enough to be worth watching, could be kept for twenty-four hours a day under the eyes of the police and in the sound of official propaganda, with all other channels of communication closed. The possibility of enforcing not only complete obedience to the will of the State, but complete uniformity of opinion on all subjects, now existed for the first time."* (Orwell 205) This passage comments on the evolution of technological advancement, suggesting that widespread technology was born from today's world. This is another remark about how current practices will spur the creation of a dystopia. The Party, the dystopian government in *1984*, takes advantage of the booming technological industry by manipulating technology to become instruments of surveillance. This is how they manage to keep tabs on the majority, thereby verifying total conformity.

Now that the majority has been stabilized through community, conformity, and ingrained ideologies, the final link to secure the majority as one being is through uniform ignorance. Intellectualism brings inequality. There will always be those who know more than another and this distance can create envy, sadness, and most of all, difference. However, if the majority were equally ignorant, there would be no inequality to cause these unhappy emotions. There is a balance between everyone if they are all on the same intellectual plane; and stability comes from this sameness. A state of ignorance is almost lifeless. If what you know is the same that everyone knows, with very small differences, almost everyone's life is the same with similar actions, thoughts, and patterns. Emphasis on entertainment and getting the job done replaces the need for intellectual development within a dystopia. The government conditions the majority to pursue entertainment and please themselves on a superficial level. Technological entertainment is the main outlet for fun because it requires little or no thought. Through restricted insight, conformity is enforced. If one's life has already been constructed and revised to create a constant false sense of happiness, anger should never appear. Instead, the majority remains blissfully ignorant and stable. One would unknowingly exist as a fish in a small tank within a room with thousands of identical tanks filled with identical fish. Total uniformity of thought, appearance, and opinion is

a sad reality of a world, but it is the point of dystopias. In creating sameness there is no difference to be afraid of, no variety to inspire, and no distinguishable factors to set the majority apart.

Implanting ignorance in the majority is illustrated in the following four passages from *Fahrenheit 451*. The Fire Chief Captain Beatty explains to Montag (the novel's protagonist) the history of how and why man became ignorant and the evolution of firemen. They support the claim that "ignorance creates equality" among the majority and, therefore, creates a childlike happiness to ensure the stability of the dystopia:

"Out of the nursery into the college and back to the nursery; there's your intellectual pattern for the past five centuries or more." (Bradbury 55)

"School is shortened, discipline relaxed, philosophies, histories, languages dropped, English and spelling gradually gradually neglected, finally almost completely ignored. Life is immediate, the job counts, pleasure lies all about after work. Why learn anything save pressing buttons, pulling switches, fitting nuts and bolts?" (Bradbury 56)

"Yes, but what about the firemen, then?" asked Montag.

"Ah." Beatty leaned forward.... "What more easily explained and natural? With schools turning out more runners, jumpers, racers, tinkers, grabbers, snatchers, fliers and swimmers instead of examiners, critics, knowers and imaginative creators, the word 'intellectual', of course, became the swear word it deserved to be. You always dread the unfamiliar.... We must all be alike. Not everyone born free and equal, as the Constitution says, but every one made equal. Each man the image of every other; then all are happy, for there are no mountains to make them cower, to judge themselves against. So! A book is a loaded gun in the house next door. Burn it. Take the shot from the weapon. Breach man's mind. Who knows who might be the target of a well-read man? Me? I won't stomach them for a minute. And so when houses were finally fireproofed completely... ..there was no longer need of firemen for the old purposes. They were given the new job, as custodians of our peace of mind, the focus of our understandable and rightful dread of being inferior; official censors, judges, and executors. That's you, Montag, and that's me." (Bradbury 57-59)

"Peace, Montag. Give the people contests they win by remembering the words to popular songs of the names of state capitals or how much corn Iowa grew last year. Cram them full of noncombustible data, chock them so damned full of 'facts' they feel stuffed, but absolutely 'brilliant' with information. Then they'll feel they're thinking, they'll get a sense of motion without moving. And they'll be happy, because facts of that sort don't change. Don't give them any slippery stuff like philosophy or sociology to tie things up with. That way lies melancholy.... So bring on your clubs and parties, your acrobats and magicians, your daredevils, jet cars, motorcycle helicopters, your sex and heroin, more of everything to do with the automatic reflex." (Bradbury 61)

III. 1984: Emphasis on ignorance of the past

Another common trait within a dystopian society is the majority's lack of exposure to the past. Often, history has been erased, rewritten, or revised. This alteration is done by the small few who run the dystopia. They are usually the most informed on subjects that have been hidden, and hold the greatest amount of truth about their world. It is their intention to delete or manipulate the past to promote an appreciation for dystopia. An example of this can be seen in *1984*. The Party reflects on the past, commenting that people were starving and there wasn't enough of everything to go around; but since the Party had been established, they set those problems right. Even with the Party in control, the majority still did not have enough to eat, and were exposed to shabby living conditions and short supplies. The following two scenes reflect Winston's thoughts about his dystopian world and their editing of the past:

"The past, he reflected, had not merely been altered, it had been actually destroyed. For how could you establish even the most obvious fact when there existed no record outside your own memory?" (Orwell 35)

"This day-to-day falsification of the past, carried out by the Ministry of Truth, is as necessary to the stability of the regime as the work of repression and espionage carried out by the Ministry of Love." (Orwell 213)

These quotes both speak of the Party's obsession with rewriting the past, or in other words, the truth. This alteration enables the Party to paint the picture of their dystopia in the best possible light and to erase all the memories of individuality that could tempt the majority to lose interest in their society. Through the destruction and exaggeration of truth, dystopia controls history in order to gain power over stability. If the majority were oblivious to how life once was, they would be unable to compare their own lives to the past and understand how humanity had been reshaped. Instead, they are left in the dark so they will never comprehend that they are being oppressed. Consequently, they will never rebel and will continue to function in a stable manner. Winston considers, "Why should one feel it to be intolerable unless one had some kind of ancestral memory that things had once been different?" (Orwell 60) This quote confirms my analysis that if the past is kept secret, the majority will never realize what the typical human life had once been. They will remain satisfied with the absent lives they lead.

A dystopia requires an inner structure of people who can oversee the running of the dystopia. A dystopian society has a totalitarian government and demands complete subservience of the majority. Fear of the government is another reason why people conform to exactly whatever the person in power wants. Those who hold complete control understand the truth of their world—the lies and the reasons why. Just look at Mustapha Mond in *Brave New World*, or The Commander in *The Handmaid's Tale*, or the Fire Chief Captain Beatty in *Fahrenheit 451* or The Party in *1984*. Somewhere within these novels they reveal the hidden secrets to the protagonist and why they believe that what they did, in order for the dystopia to work, was better for mankind. Besides the power-hoarders who are in complete control, there is another distribution of power within a firm class system. These are the class rankings in *Brave New World* in descending order: Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon. Within the rankings there are Alpha pluses and Alpha minuses and so on. This specific social ranking determines your

social position, how lavish a life you may lead, and whom you may sleep with. It even determines your physical attractiveness. The Alphas and Betas are uniquely matured eggs, where the Gammas, Deltas, and Epsilons are all different clones. Within *1984* there are three classes: the Inner Party, the Party, and the Proles. They are very similar to the upper class, middle class, and lower class of today. *The Handmaid's Tale* is first of divided by whether or not you are male or female. If female, you have become the lowest of society and within this gender there exists another entire caste system: Wives, Daughters, Handmaids, Aunts, Marthas, and Econowives. Also, two social classes that are considered too low to be part of day-to-day life are the Unwomen and the Jezebels. The men's rank: Commanders of the Faithful, Eyes, Angels, and Guardians of the Faith. In *Fahrenheit 451*, money defines social status; whomever can afford the most objects and entertainment is of the higher class. Power plays a large role in commanding the majority, and within the majority who can control whom. All of these classes serve to create an illusion of power within the majority, which in turn, gives the classes the chance to feel in control of something. Without this opportunity, to exert one's will upon another, one would acknowledge their powerlessness, breaking the pretense of happiness and corrupting the eternal stability that dystopia relies on.

In dystopia, humanity is forced to evolve in order to cope with the expectations demanded: stability and happiness for all. During humanity's reconstruction it is deprived of: solitude, true love, truth, knowledge, actual happiness, and the individual.

Solitude is completely taboo in a dystopian society. Those in power have done everything in their control to demolish any downtime for one to be alone. Being alone is the very place in which the individual is born, because it is the only time one is less connected to the majority. They have time to be themselves, to ponder, and to question, giving way to realizations. These moments are pivotal in the development of the individual.

True love is nonexistent within the majority. The majority is loveless because that spurs real happiness and betrays the false sense of happiness that the dystopian world is trying so desperately to create. Personal relationships are too private and would throw the unity of the majority out of whack; therefore, real love between two people cannot exist. The saying "you must love yourself before you can love others" applies to a dystopia as well. You must have realized yourself as an individual, separate from the majority, before you can harbor feelings of love.

Dystopian governments run on false information so that they can control the majority into believing what they want them to believe. This ultimately controls the majority's actions. The truth has been hidden, because it, too, would fuel the individualist movement. (Through truth understanding is found, awakening one's mind.)

Knowledge is no longer valued in a dystopia because the majority is ignorant of truth. They have been conditioned to seek fulfillment through technological entertainment or drugs/sex/alcohol and to remain loyal to their dystopia. Not only has knowledge lost its rank among society, but also it has been concealed. Through the revision of the past, the destruction of books, forgotten details, and biased perspectives, knowledge has been lost. Knowledge has only been rekindled by the individual in their search for the truth.

Actual happiness will never be experienced by the majority. All they will ever feel are suggestions of happiness. In order to feel *true* happiness, an entire reserve of emotions, experiences, and thought is needed. The majority lives in a restricted environment. Once happiness is felt, one would be equipped to determine whether that feeling meets the standards of

its category and if it really is happiness. Within dystopia, the majority is meant to enjoy superficial happiness; it is the ultimate goal that has finally been achieved. However, through the demolition of truth and the absence of knowledge, how can the majority tell that what they have has been yearned for? Their life has been a realized dream that mankind has pined for... uninterrupted happiness. Yet, the majority is incapable of comprehending this concept.

The abolishment of the individual is the most horrific part of dystopia, because the most marvelous detail about the world is distinction in each and every human being. It is a fact that no two human beings are identical in mind, body, and spirit. How boring would life be if a constant sameness of ideas, interests, and looks plagued life? Individuals create; they are the seeds for change and growth. Without diversity, humanity would be impaired and forever stuck in a rut.

The ideas behind dystopia are positive—universal stability and happiness—but the existence of dystopia takes too much from humanity to reach its goals. The most imperative being the individual. Our vulnerable world needs to heed the warnings projected by dystopian literature. This literature supplies us with a reasonable theory on where our world is heading and I truly do not wish to see it become reality.

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