A STUDY IN DYSTOPIAN FICTION

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

Big Brother. Soma. Cyberspace. Words and ideas spawned from the texts of dystopian fiction have permeated modern culture, and in many ways, helped define it. A young man in a bowler hat with eye makeup, cane and cod-piece is a common fixture at Halloween parties, thanks to Stanley Kubrick and his film adaptation of Anthony Burgess’ “A Clockwork Orange.” Many are aware that paper burns at 451 degrees Fahrenheit, not because of science class, but instead owing to Ray Bradbury’s novel. While valuable for their storytelling and entertainment, the true significance of dystopian works lies in their ability to speak into one’s relationship to God, country, humankind and one’s own Self.

It is evident that a major analysis could be done on any number of themes presented in dystopian literature. In truth, as several books have been written regarding only a single aspect of dystopia, this paper cannot provide a fully comprehensive study in the entire genre. Therefore, rather than providing summaries of each work and their respective impacts on both literature and culture, the collective body of works studied will contribute to a generalized explanation of themes and concepts present in most dystopian fiction, followed by present-day parallels and a discussion of the significance of the genre and its ideas.
II. DEFINITION

The term “utopia” was coined circa 1516 by Thomas More. Literally meaning “no place”, it describes an island where everything is perfect. A “dystopia”, then, would be a negative utopia, a place in which everything is imperfect. There is some debate between the terms “dystopia” and “anti-utopia”. Generally, a dystopia does not pretend to be good, as in the case of “1984” and “Anthem”. An anti-utopia would, however, claim to be truly in the business of providing happiness for their citizens, as in the case of “The Giver” and “We”. For the purposes of this study, the term dystopia will be used to cover all works and themes presented and discussed.

A dystopian society is ruled by group with a private agenda shrouded in euphemisms or outright lies. This group will use conditioning or coercion to maintain their rule, which often mirrors such real-world systems as communism, Apartheid, and the Roman Catholic Church. The controlling group regulates most aspects of the individual’s existence, everything from one’s daily routine to their family unit and career. The individual is not important as anything more than a part of the whole. As long as the status quo is maintained, the individual is typically safe, anonymous in the crowd.

As conflict is necessary in storytelling, no dystopian work would be complete without dissention. It may be one person or a
group, and there will often be an event in a main character’s experience that reveals the rift between the way things are and the way things might be better. Common devices for this event are missing a dose of emotion suppressants, seeing the hidden inner workings of the ruling system, or the discovery of forbidden elements from ages past. This awakening will give rise to a spirit of individualism, an awareness of human rights, and the knowledge that all is not as it seems and must be brought to light and, if possible corrected.

As with much of literature, the ending may either be positive or negative; it is the journey that matters. The message of the work can often be more easily delivered if the hero suffers a tragic end at the hands of the society, and many of these works offer this feature. In this way, many dystopian works read as morality tales, aimed at pointing out flaws of the present and extrapolating them into the future. There is little left for readers to sort out; they know which side is right and which side is wrong. What is left to interpret is where to align the stereotypes in the contemporary societies and systems.

In short, a dystopian fiction centers on a dissenting person or group in a supposed perfect society, awakened to inhumanity and willing to affect a change. Using this definition, the authors of these works have provided each human being with instructions for recognizing and overcoming such systems in their own life.
III. THEMES

There are five major themes that this paper will identify and review: pluralism versus individualism; chaos versus order; the precision of language; war versus peace; and humanity.

Pluralism versus Individualism

Much of early dystopian literature points to literal totalitarianism and communism seen on the rise by authors. Zamyatin and Rand both grew up in Russia watching Stalin take power, and as a result, “We” and “Anthem” have direct correlations to a collective form of government, taken to extremes for the purposes of satire and storytelling. Later works such as Orwell’s “1984” borrow heavily from these early novels, for while Stalin fell, many have continued to see the danger signs of collectivism and oligarchy creep into more recent politics. Certainly, Hitler used a similar approach with his Nazi propaganda to guide young minds, mirror in “1984” in the forms of the Youth League and Hate Week.

The idea of collectivism is taken to extreme in these works through the education of the masses that they are not important as anything more than parts of the whole. They exist only to serve the State, and anything that benefits the State should benefit them, not the other way around. Needs are more or less provided in return for services to the State in the form of jobs, but careers are typically assigned and one does one’s work
without question. Working hard is expected, but ambition for personal gain is squashed. Ambition must only be for the progress of the State.

To reinforce the concept of parts of the whole, many works describe people as numbers, either by simply replacing the term "people" with "numbers", or by actually making their name a number, in whole or in part.

Of all these works, "Anthem" speaks against this more than the others. Rand removes singular pronouns from the language of the people, so Equality 7-2521 says "we" instead of "I", "our" instead of "my", and so forth. The story ends positively, as Equality and his lover escape from the society and live in the mountains, isolated from the State, starting their own society that will celebrate what they believe to be the most powerful word in the world: EGO.

It is not simply enough, however, to suggest that each should run away from all forms of government or system and live independently. Rand begins with this as a matter of necessity, but as Equality describes his plans for raising a family, it is clear that he intends a new community built on interdependence, rather than independence. He suggests that man finds strength in numbers, but numbers must not be man’s only strength.

In every dystopian work, the protagonist has at least one helper, if not an entire structure of people to provide a sort of underground rebellion. This proves the idea that people were
not meant to function outside of community, while the theme of the work asserts that neither are people meant to simply be teeth in the gears of the machine.

**Chaos versus Order**

Seemingly all of these stories take place in what is to be the future, and the design of the community is commonly the same. Quite often, there is a theme of mathematics. Buildings are squared, streets are straight, life is regulated by a chart, and there is little room for the unexpected. “We” goes so far as to feature an equation for every situation so that a proper happiness coefficient may be derived. There is typically little color, people often wear matching clothes, and even hair (when it is not shaved) is typically the same.

The purpose for this mass regulation is twofold. First, it contributes to the impression of sameness that is vital to collectivism. Second, it keeps choices out of the minds of individuals, leaving it instead to the State to decide what is best and when it is best for the citizens. This takes power from the people, which is exactly what must happen if the State is to maintain control. Much in the way a parent would make all decisions for a young child, that citizen, as a young child, would not have any control of the parent. Interestingly, the State often uses a familial name for the leader, such as Father, Big Brother, or Uncle.
There is also commonly a great lack of nature. Animals are rare, if found at all, and even trees and plants are strange. In “We”, the character D-503 mentions his discomfort and uneasiness at walking upon the green, spongy, foreign earth. Quite often, the escape from the society means venturing out into nature, which is commonly described as wild and untamed by the characters, though typically appears beautiful and serene to readers. Nature does not grown in squares, nor does it adhere to mathematical tables, therefore it cannot be controlled by the State. It also often produces feelings in people, aiding them in reflection and relaxation, for which there is no purpose in a dystopian setting.

There are interesting parallels to this concept. It is common to see a child twirling a finger next to his ear to symbolize another being crazy or insane. This comes from the ancient idea that intelligence meant one thought in straight lines, while only the insane thought in circles. A humorous opposition to this idea is the ancient Oriental belief that evil spirits only traveled in straight lines, which explains the arched bridges and curved rooflines in Oriental architecture. That might certainly be argued as the case in many of these dystopian societies.

Two prominent elements that fall into this category are religion and sex. Religion is very rarely seen in a dystopia as it relates to a deity. If there is a religion, it is more often
a religion of the State, in which the leader of the State is worshiped, or even the very State itself. If one is to believe in a deity beyond the State, then one may claim to be bound to laws that are higher than the State. This provides an uncontrollable variable that the State must not allow, and as a result, there is no freedom of religion. Either there is a State religion, or no religion.

The other reason there would be no need of religion in a dystopia is found in considering the purpose of religion. All religions are man-made systems intended to explain a reason for existence and a pattern for living. A thoroughly dystopian government will make it clear that the individual exists to serve the state. The government will also have regulated every aspect of a person’s life, so a pattern of living will also be clear. If a one understands why and how one exists, there is no need for religion.

In the matter of sex, authors take different paths but arrive at the same place. Some societies promote rampant sexual activity, while others entirely repress it, often through medication. In either case, the end result is to squash the longing for any particular person. This would also present a variable that might cause an individual to follow a law of the heart, rather than a law of the State.

It is also very rare for a couple (when there is coupling) to decide on their own to have a child. Children are typically
born in a laboratory, or there are birth mothers that are merely baby-makers; the resulting child does not have an emotional attachment to anyone. “Children of Men” presents a unique dynamic, in that mass sterility has plagued the planet. Despite the eliminated risk of pregnancy, sexual activity decreases. Author P.D. James suggests that part of the appeal of sex is that the couple is, at the very least, mimicking the ability to create life, and that is what contributes to its power.

The Precision of Language

From a linguistic standpoint, dystopian literature often provides an additional lens to view the story and its theme. In some works, most notably in “A Clockwork Orange”, the author sets up a new way of speech. Anthony Burgess is quite famous for his invention of “Nadsat”, the language spoken by the youth in his novel. Burgess observed the youth of his day taking slang and words from other countries, and imagined a setting where the language drew from Russian words, rhyming slang and references to Shakespeare and the King James Bible. In creating this unique dialect, he not only contributed to the future-tense setting of the novel, but also demonstrated through language the difference between the youth and adults. The device of first-person narrative without providing a lexicon assumes the reader’s understanding of the language, which serves to build credibility in the young protagonist, Alex, until, by the end,
his language is perfectly understandable to the reader. In the story, however, it draws a line between the two classes (youth and adult), limiting their ability to communicate with definite language.

Another linguistic study could be made of "Newspeak" in Orwell’s "1984". An entire section of The Party is devoted to revising the language in the name of efficiency, but the actual purpose is to remove definitive language from speech. By shrinking the language, making words apply in multiple situations, and the paradoxical definitions of terms such as "doublethink" (believing two contradictory thoughts to be simultaneously true), it becomes impossible to be truly clear about anything.

"The Giver" presents an opposite side of that coin, in which the precision of language is essential to good communication in the society. The character Jonas is introduced pondering the correct word to define his feelings, finally settling not on "nervous" as he initially thought, but "apprehensive". Lois Lowry keeps this theme at the forefront, turning it around when Jonas discovers the concept of love and asks his parents if they love him. They are unable to respond and chastise him for using such antiquated and ambiguous language. The concept of love is simply too intangible and the dystopia is not set up to measure it.
In “Anthem”, the character Liberty expresses frustration at her inability to convey her feelings to Equality, due to the lack of singular pronouns.

Today, the Golden One stopped suddenly and said:
"We love you."
But they frowned and shook their head and looked at us helplessly.
"No," they whispered, "that is not what we wished to say."
They were silent, then they spoke slowly, and their words were halting, like the words of a child learning to speak for the first time:
"We are one . . . alone . . . and only . . . and we love you who are one . . . alone . . . and only."
We looked into each other's eyes and we knew that the breath of a miracle had touched us, and fled, and left us groping vainly.

This frustration is echoed in many of the dystopian works as the characters struggle to make sense of their emotions and ideas in a society that worked to scratch out all avenues of personal expression. Language is vital to communication, and the less capable a human is to communicate, the less communion and intimacy one can experience with another, leaving the State as the only true object of affection in the person’s life.

War versus Peace

In these stories, the situation of war or peace is typically a concern, but it makes little difference which is a
part of the State. That it is maintained is the only important function. "1984" features an ever-changing enemy, because the war must not end. The government in "Equilibrium" maintains its control because the peace must not end. In this sense, the Orwellian "Ingsoc" principle holds true: war is peace. War equals peace and peace equals war when the approach is the same. Plato, in describing the ideal republic, portrays a people that are generally pacifist in nature, but will fight if necessary. In these dystopian communities, citizens are either fully pacifist and unable to fight, or fully capable and expecting to always fight. The motive behind both cases is the perpetuation of fear, which keeps the citizen looking to the leader to determine what is best for the community.

**Humanity**

The most obvious indicator of a dystopian government’s imperfect nature is their approach and attitude toward humanity. The repression of the "free radicals" of the human mind and heart, such as love, spiritual awakening and discovery, creativity and invention keeps a person focused on their tasks, allowing no time or space to think, consider, reflect or ponder. One’s motivation is not for themselves, but only for the State they are conditioned to love.

When it comes to needs and desires, there is a similar approach taken to the War versus Peace idea: either all or
nothing. Again, the particular side does not matter, as long as it is complete. Physical needs may be entirely met, as in “Brave New World”, or constantly short in supply, as in “1984”, but in both cases, the individual’s focus remains on those needs. Evolutionary theory indicates that creatures turn their focuses to higher matters when basic needs are met, so in the case of the former, there must be a mechanism in place to make the devices that meet needs more and more impressive, so technological advancements are applied to these industries. Regardless, the aim of the government must be to keep the people busy, either through structure, abundant pleasure, or constant want.

Instincts, particularly sexual ones, are often repressed by medication. Rights are limited and privacy is minimal. The nature versus nurture idea is put to the test as the government creates an individual’s reality from birth, controlling everything through nurture, creating a perfectly predictable human being.

Zamyatin, in keeping with the satire of “We”, creates a situation where the government praises the machines and robots as perfect, distinguishable only from humans by one thing: imagination. As an effort to achieve perfection, doctors have found the location of imagination in the brain and all are invited to “hurry to the auditorium where the Great Operation is being performed.”
IV. EXTERNAL DYSTOPIA

If a dystopia is defined as a society ruled by an authoritative power that presents itself as beneficial while masking a negative agenda, there are certainly many parallels worth exploring, whether in governments, religions, or organizations.

Concern of the loss of personal freedom in America is at an all-time high. It must also be observed that flexibility and freedom should not be confused. Easy access to information on the Internet concerns flexibility, while the limits on such information concerns freedom. Internet service providers are regulated by the FCC, a government organization. As email became ubiquitous and drove down patronage of the US Postal Service, the government began discussing possible ways to regulate email. Journalists have enjoyed certain privileges under the First Amendment which are not being fully extended to online journalists, as in the case of Josh Wolf, who was imprisoned for not giving a videotape to the FBI. They asserted he was not a true journalist and therefore not protected by the Rights of Press. The case was eventually dropped, but not before Wolf spent over 200 days in prison.

The terror events in New York on September 11, 2001, led to the US government imposing unprecedented levels of constitutional infringements, both in legislation passed and
personal actions on the part of the President. As hotly as
these issues have been debated, George W. Bush is not the first
president to pull back constitutional freedom in US history.
Restrictions and regulations have been imposed on everything
from alcohol consumption to property rights to personal privacy
in the last century. A simple thing like a seatbelt law might
be argued as a benefit for car passengers, but if one considers
the difference in automobile deaths now compared to the 1960s,
it is clear there is a staggering shift: more people die now in
car crashes. The most compelling reason is the rise in the
speed limit, which is regulated by the government. Looking at
the larger picture, a seatbelt law might be construed as a way
to shift the eyes of responsibility from the government to the
citizen. While the US may not have entered the realm of
dystopia as defined above, it does seem be eyeing the gates.

Moving beyond the political realm, one can find dystopian
elements throughout culture, complete with conditioning and
coercion. An obvious example would be gangs. Few need an
explanation of the incongruence between talk of “family” in a
gang and the internal violence. One is accepted only as long as
one is acquiescent. If a gang member were to disagree, he or
she is often beaten or killed.

Corruption and negative stereotypes have surround labor
unions since their inception. Various unions have made
headlines for controlling their members through force, removing
individuals’ choices and freedoms and even racking up attempted murder charges against their own.

A subtler way one might observe a dystopian influence in modern culture would be in biased presentation by organizations that are expected to be trustworthy. Besides the government, this would include leaders in all industries, such as pharmaceuticals, food production and public utilities. Scandal from all of these groups is not uncommon, and in many ways expected. Public outrage may still be present, but surprise is decreasing as more and more leading corporations fall. Consumers base their decisions from statements created and paid for by these corporations, delivered through advertising agencies whose prime allegiance is not to the consumer but to their own profits. A trip through the grocery store provides clear evidence of this. A bottle of juice, marketed for children, displays “Natural Flavors” yet contains 0% juice. Parents see the word “natural” and believe it healthier than soda. Many of the key words used on food packaging fall into this category, presenting consumers with a false sense of faith in their product as healthier or more appealing, while it may or may not be true. Clever wording is the specialty of the advertising agency, and it does not stop with mottos and slogans.

Advertising agencies employ another practice that perks the concern of conspiracy watchdogs: behavior-based communications.
Many retailers now offer a card that tracks purchases and spending habits. The user receives coupons from time to time based on the spending tracked with that card. Initially, this appears to be a pleasant convenience, but some could feel nervous about this sort of tracking. In a similar way, search engines such as Google keep track of every search made in their application, for the purposes of improving results. As the results are displayed, however, relevant advertisements appear in the margins of the page. This has been brought into their email service, Gmail. The advertisements are based on the actual content of the emails themselves. While Google asserts that no one is specifically reading the email to find appropriate advertising, the work instead being done by a computer, it shows how simple it would be to take the next step and monitor a person’s activities. As online activities increase in width and depth, email is more frequently used for receipts from purchases, utility bill statements and payments, job searches, real estate hunts, companionship services like Match.com and eHarmony, in addition to personal correspondence.

Yet another example would be the media, which, according to surveys, people generally distrust. Ratings, however, combined with an increase in dedicated news programs and even dedicated news networks, indicate otherwise.

One of the most famous organizations that has been worked into dystopian literature is the Roman Catholic Church. The
Protestant Reformation brought to light centuries of the controlling nature of the Church through fear and the guarding of the Bible. Priests alone read the Scriptures; priests alone interpreted the Scriptures. Interaction with God was mediated by the Church. It was a sin to question the Church or its decisions. The portrayal of the Great Benefactor in Zamyatin’s “We” bears a remarkable likeness to the early Catholic Church, and Zamyatin himself confirmed this parallel.

A documentary from 2007 about Scientology made international news, resulting in a flurry of interest over the practices and nature of that faith. Both professional and amateur videos available on the Internet portray similar fear and manipulation tactics on the part of church leaders and members, and former church members report the same things. A smaller, though deadlier, version of this would be cult groups like Jonestown and the Branch Davidians, where the truth was skewed and individuals were controlled by power-hungry leaders with their own agendas.

Whether manifested in an imposing government, a bullying union boss, a misrepresenting corporation or an overbearing family member, literal and metaphorical parallels to dystopian societies are everywhere.
V. INTERNAL DYSTOPIA

The most dangerous form of dystopia is the kind the one sets up in one’s own mind. An internal system motivated by fear, misinformation, manipulation and isolation will cripple a society from within even more effectively than through political means. While a political or military structure may impose an oligarchy, there will always be dissent, even if just the quiet belief that the system is wrong. What makes the dystopia complete, however, is the collective agreement from citizens that things are as they should be. If this internal conclusion is made, even without a totally corrupt ruling power, it is, in some ways, as if that power is already in place.

At one end of the spectrum, a dystopia would preach the value of full collectivism, where any life is only for the purpose of serving the State. At the other end, there is the rugged individualism modeled by Equality (turned Prometheus) in Rand’s “Anthem”, where he literally finds a shack in the woods, completely departed from all society but his own.

It is important to observe that not a single protagonist in these stories succeeds without the help of at least one other individual. This eliminates the argument for pure isolationism, yet the authors of these works clearly convey the danger of pure pluralism. The middle ground is interdependence. Humans must
depend on each other to survive, yet no single person or unit must be so important that, if removed, the society would crumble.

There are many situations of internal dystopia, each corresponding to elements of the fictional ruling powers in these works. The largest motivating component in this literature is fear, typically from isolation, change and punishment. These are the three prime motivators in self-imposed dystopian behaviors that hold people back from experience life in fuller ways.

There is great comfort for many people to know that they are not alone. There are plenty of documented cases of psychoses and neuroses that stem from isolation. Infants that are ignored, even if nourished, do not thrive as those who are coddled and shown affection. Sensory deprivation is proven to cause severe mental and emotional trauma. Humans are not wired to exist in a vacuum. Yet there is a danger in over-identifying with a group to such an extent that one loses their own selves, their own identity, and they become little more than part of the crowd. While their own identity slips farther away, the identity of the group takes over, until that person does not have any identity other than as part of the group. It may be a group of coworkers, a spouse or significant other, a school or a church. If the group is taken away, or even if the dynamic
changes, the person feels out of place, lost, confused, or disenfranchised.

A common occurrence of this is when a group changes a leader, such as a new pastor in a church, a new boss at work, or even a couple that breaks up. A person with a healthy sense of identity adjusts to fit the new dynamic and paradigm. One who has lost their sense of identity to the group has nothing they can adjust. The group itself has changed, and as that particular group identity is gone, there are no longer the defining elements that allowed that person to feel “themselves”. They will either stay or leave, but in either case, they do not adjust; they merely trade the outdated group identity for the current one. This idea is clearly shown in “1984” when Oceania changes enemies from East Asia to Eurasia in the middle of a hate speech. The speaker receives the news in his ear and continues his tirade against the enemy, only changing the name. Volunteers quickly run and replace the hate posters to match the new truth, and the crowd barely registers the change.

Codependence in families is a common example of the fear of punishment. One member of the family may control all the others by coercion and manipulation, resorting to guilt tactics when confronted. The family learns to play within a certain set of rules that prevents any of them from experiencing greater levels of communication and intimacy.
In sometimes less tangible forms of punishment, fear can creep into the mind of anyone seeking to better themselves, simply because it contains the unknown. One might be afraid to fail because they fear the punishment of ridicule. Another might be afraid to succeed because they fear the punishment of envy or mutiny. Many have experienced well-meaning friends and loved ones who will politely caution against setting hopes too high, yet turn around and chastise for not being proactive.

Finally, an important element for any dystopia to be effective is the management and manipulation of truth. Possibly the most common way individuals keep themselves chained is by ignoring their own ignorance. It is much easier to close one’s eyes to environmental, political and humanitarian concerns around the world, because one fears that learning of these issues will lead to an uncomfortable lifestyle change. It is easier to say, “I don’t want to know,” rather than be willing to let new evidence inform future decisions. This keeps people rooted to a false, self-constructed paradigm that becomes farther from reality as time passes. In “Anthem”, the society lives without electricity. It is not clear how this was lost, but when Equality discovers electrical power and how to harness it, he is rebuked for assuming to know more than the Scholars.

If this one idea can be overcome, the idea that truth is not something to be feared but something to be embraced, then
all other fears can be overcome and individuals can grow and evolve, their only constraint being the pace of their search for truth. Combined with a healthy community built on interdependence, the search for truth will ultimately result in the powerful discovery of meaning and significance. To fully experience the joys and wonder of humanity, humans must take responsibility for their actions, keep their eyes and minds open to greater understanding and deeper knowledge, value the life around them, and embrace themselves as members of existence.
VI. CONCLUSION

The protagonists in dystopian stories often share a common tale. They learn that there is more to experience than their government will allow; they feel a previously-repressed need or desire grow from within; they ultimately determine that life as they know it is not really life as it should be. What sets them apart from the countless others is their decision to question, their willingness to challenge presumptions, their thirst for knowledge and experience, and courage to risk their comfort to make life better. While these are all admirable qualities in the opinion of most, it requires stepping out of a comfort zone and being willing to hurt for the cause. The reason these protagonists are truly heroes is that they are not, in general, merely doing this for their own good, but for the good of the entire human race. It becomes irrelevant in the story whether the person lives or dies in the process. The determinant of their success is whether or not they improved the situation for those to follow.

Turning to present day reality, these heroes are typically known as activists. Martin Luther King, Jr., Stephen Biko, Mahatma Ghandi, and Malcolm X all died for their voice, but each of them, and many others, would have accepted their death as part of the path to greater freedom for individuals. This is a
very public version of the decision to overcome individual and political dystopias.

A dystopia becomes successful when it finally removes the individuality from the individual; the humanity from the human. Only when people become numbers, not “one” but “one of”, can a ruling power truly take over. There have been and always will be unfair and corrupt governments and systems, but what makes one of these truly dystopic is the acceptance from the masses that agree, “This is right.”

Just as an oligarchy can strip power from individuals, individuals can relinquish their own selves through internal constructs that equal nothing short of a dystopia. Manipulation, misinformation, ignorance and fear need not always come from the outside. Indeed, when originating from one’s own mind, the effects can be much more persuasive and the damage much more lasting.

As the heroes of dystopian literature struggled and fought to overcome the external sources of control, so each individual must look inside themselves to find those things that bind them to fear, slavery, war and ignorance. As the mindless blindly shuffle along in uniformity in so many of these classic texts, there is a part of each human that is blind to the limits they have themselves allowed to be placed on their lives. Once aware of these limits, they have the same choice as D-503, Winston
Smith or Bernard Marx: to go with the flow or swim upstream. The choice to fight the system is never without sacrifice, and one may not overcome deep-seeded roots of fear and ignorance in their own minds without a great deal of struggle. But the end result, as each dystopian hero believes and hopes to reach, is freedom.
APPENDIX A: SIGNS & PORTENTS

Following is a list of items from popular dystopian works that find correspondence in our society today. These may not necessarily lead to a dystopian society, but are simply presented as possible hints of things to come.

Big Brother is watching you. “1984”
- Chicago has begun implementing digital surveillance systems all throughout the city to monitor various activities. Cameras are fitted with microphones that can react to sounds like gunshots, swiveling quickly to catch as much action as possible. Speeding tickets are also issued through camera surveillance.

Houses are made of glass to remove privacy. “We”
- Under the Patriot Act, the government may perform various invasions of privacy if they suspect one of ties to a terrorist organization.

The owls died out first. “Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?”
- All around the world, millions of bees are dying. This has created a serious concern for many who understand the role bees play in pollination and agriculture. Bleakest estimates
show that without a turnaround in bee population, humans may be required to begin seeking alternative food sources in as little as ten years.

The enemy does not matter, as long as there is one. “1984”
- Everything is a war: the war on terror, the war on drugs, the war on cancer, the war on communism, the war on illiteracy, etc. Keeping the language of war conjures a certain set of reactions and systems of dealing with problems, creating a “with us or against us” mentality, leaving less room for creative problem-solving.

Foreign workers are abused and abandoned. “Children of Men”
- Public awareness and concern is reaching an unprecedented high in the United States regarding foreign workers and illegal immigrants. Stories of abuse and unfair practices are common.

- Youth sports leagues have removed winning and losing from the game, to avoid hurt feelings in children. Names for ethnic groups have changed several times over the years to be more sensitive and politically correct, leaving people unsure what to call their neighbors. Due to globalization, younger
adults are leaving poorer countries in droves in search of a better life, and in doing so, adopt the culture of their new home, losing ties with their own heritage. Sometimes a single generation later, they are not able to speak their native language.

Narcotics are mass-distributed. “Brave New World”

- Pharmaceutical companies have never sold more emotion-related drugs than at present. Whether for social anxiety, depression, insomnia or hyperactivity, both children and adults are more heavily-medicated now than people of any other time.
APPENDIX B: WORKS STUDIED

Novels
- 1984 - George Orwell
- Anthem - Ayn Rand
- Brave New World - Aldous Huxley
- Children of Men - P.D. James
- A Clockwork Orange - Anthony Burgess
- Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? - Philip K. Dick
- Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury
- Farnham’s Freehold - Robert A. Heinlein
- The Giver - Lois Lowry
- Logan’s Run - William F. Nolan and George Clayton Johnson
- Neuromancer - William Gibson
- We - Yevgeny Zamyatin

Films
- Æon Flux (2005)
- Bladerunner (1982)
- Brave New World (1998)
- Brazil (1985)
- Children of Men (2006)
- Dark City (1998)
- Equilibrium (2002)
- Fahrenheit 451 (1966)
- Gattaca (1997)
- Idiocracy (2006)
- The Island (2005)
- Planet of the Apes (1968) (2001)
- THX 1138 (1971)
- V for Vendetta (2005)

Non-Fiction
- The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature - M. Keith Booker (1994)
- No Place Else: Explorations in Utopian and Dystopian Fiction
  - Edited by Rabkin, Greenberg and Olander (1983)