Speculative Satire in Twentieth-Century Utopia and Dystopia

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This study integrates the literature and correspondence of such Inklings authors as C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien into the arc of Commonwealth utopian and dystopian literature of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Because utopian authors such as Samuel Butler, William Morris, and H. G. Wells employ the utopian form pioneered by Thomas More but largely abandon More’s Augustinian Catholic view of human nature, their works frequently fail to address the impediments to justice and equity that More satirically addresses in *Utopia*. Thus, the speculative fiction of later Augustinian Christian authors such as Lewis and Tolkien complements the better-known dystopian fiction of canonical dystopian authors such as George Orwell and Aldous Huxley in analyzing the complicating factors of utopia and the tendency toward dystopian elements in earlier utopian literature. In turn, later dystopian fiction by authors such as Anthony Burgess and Margaret Atwood complements elements of earlier literature in underscoring the danger of religious rhetoric underlying complicity with authoritarian regimes or rationalizing authoritarianism itself.

Chapter 1 establishes theory and terminology and examines Thomas More’s prototypical *Utopia* as a model for subsequent literature. Chapter 2 focuses on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century utopias and utopian satires such as Butler’s *Erewhon*, Morris’s *News from...*
Nowhere, and Wells’s *A Modern Utopia*. Chapter 3 examines the shift from early modernist utopianism to later modernist satire and dystopia in the wake of World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, the establishment of a socialist world power in Soviet Russia, and World War II, focusing on Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Huxley’s *Brave New World*. Chapter 4 focuses on Lewis, Tolkien, and the Inklings’ alternative reactions to both the utopian optimism of Morris and Wells and to the dystopias of Orwell and Huxley. In Chapter 5, the emphasis shifts to religious complicity with authoritarianism and fundamentalist religious theocracy as a potential basis for totalitarianism in British dystopian satire, focusing on Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange* and Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* along with arguments against theocracy in the Inklings’ literary criticism.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Portions of Chapter 4 have been adapted from my article “Utopia in Deep Heaven: Thomas More and C. S. Lewis’s Cosmic Trilogy,” *Mythlore*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2017, pp. 115-31. (see Appendix).

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Finally, I wish to thank God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit for sustaining me through many difficult times during my studies and dissertation work at Northern Illinois.
“Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness” (Psalm 115.1 ESV).
DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my grandparents, Stuart E. Parker and Pauline M. Parker, who impressed upon me at a young age the significance and value of education and without whose early support and assistance I could not have begun the journey of my education as it has since progressed.
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INTRODUCTION

The tradition of authors speculating on ideal conditions for humanity dates in the British Commonwealth literary tradition as far back as Thomas More’s *Utopia*. More’s work, and in particular his coinage of the term *utopia* from the Greek οὐ + τόπος, or “no place,” for the eponymous ostensibly ideally governed land, established the paradigm for literature depicting an ideal state of society as well as the terminology for creating and analyzing such literature. Later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British authors such as Samuel Butler, William Morris, and H. G. Wells either adopted the term outright, as in Wells’s *A Modern Utopia*, or invoked the translation of *utopia* as “nowhere,” as in Morris’s *News from Nowhere* and Butler’s *Erewhon*, an anagram of *nowhere*. Conversely, even when later authors and critics have shifted emphasis to the possible nadir of civilization, their terminology either preserves More’s construction, as in *anti-utopia*, or preserves its root while replacing its prefix. Such terms as *dystopia* and *cacotopia*, from the Greek prefixes δυσ- and κακο-, respectively, follow on an alternate interpretation of *utopia* as being derived from εὖ + τόπος, or “good place.”

Since the Renaissance and Enlightenment, utopian authors and critics have struggled to balance attempts to depict seemingly ideal environments for all citizens with ideals of individual liberty, with critics finding decidedly anti-utopian tendencies in nominal utopias. This tension has given rise to the contrary tradition of the anti-utopia or dystopia, as in prototypical dystopias such as Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* and George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, where totalitarian regimes subvert or suppress outright the liberty of their subjects. Throughout the
remainder of the twentieth century, other Commonwealth dystopias such as Anthony Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange* and Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* followed and expanded on the paradigm Huxley and Orwell established.

However, a common thread between utopia and dystopia is an underlying satire of the culture in which their authors write them. While some authors of utopia or dystopia like Orwell or Atwood approach polemic in their constructions of these speculative environments, following what Northrop Frye identifies as the tradition of the Menippean satire in general, others such as Butler present their created worlds in a more conflicted or ambivalent manner. Thus, a strict dichotomy between utopia and dystopia oversimplifies the genre, as demonstrated by works such as *Erewhon*.

These utopias and dystopias and their accompanying social and political commentary have established the significance of speculative fiction in general as a device for examining and critiquing the world as it is as well as the world as it may become. Recent years have seen a resurgence in popular interest in dystopian literature, with a spike in cultural attention to such dystopias as *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Handmaid’s Tale*. During this era, social anxieties regarding authoritarianism and the rise of “alternative facts” and “post-truth” ideologies have sparked renewed popular interest in dystopian literature addressing these themes.

This study further seeks to synthesize criticism of these works with that of works and authors not traditionally categorized as utopian or dystopian but that nonetheless contribute to utopian or dystopian thought. In particular, the Cosmic Trilogy of C. S. Lewis, although not generally classified as utopian or dystopian, presents an environment of utopian harmony in its first volume, *Out of the Silent Planet*, and it depicts and satirizes a vision of nascent dystopian totalitarianism in its third volume, *That Hideous Strength*. Lewis, who as professor of Medieval
and Renaissance literature also wrote scholarly criticism of the prototype of the genre, More’s *Utopia*, integrates a great deal of this criticism into his own fiction. As a result, this literature, informed by Lewis’s religious and political views as well as those of J. R. R. Tolkien and other Inklings authors, represents a significant countercurrent to the more conventional dystopias of Huxley and Orwell in analyzing and criticizing elements of modernity that impede freedom and equity in society.

Each succeeding generation of utopian satire, meanwhile, criticized the ideas of the previous generation, building on the tradition of utopia and dystopia. Orwell, for instance, critiqued the optimism of early modernist utopias by Morris and Wells as well as the feasibility of heavily agrarian and technology-restricted utopias such as those of Morris and Butler. Other authors outside the mainstream of utopian and dystopian fiction, such as Lewis, further added to this literary conversation in responding to and criticizing Morris and Wells. Moreover, Lewis and Orwell read and reviewed each other’s work, adding to the body of criticism on utopia and dystopia. In turn, later authors such as Burgess challenged Orwell’s dystopian vision in fiction such as *A Clockwork Orange* and hybrid works such as *1985*, while authors such as Atwood in *The Handmaid’s Tale* approached dystopia from a feminist perspective, building on Orwell’s paradigm while introducing feminist considerations. This criticism of utopian visions also occurs within generations and even within the body of work of a single author, as Wells’s early utopianism progressed to later dystopia.

Chapter 1 focuses on the utopian paradigm as established in More’s work and critical theory of utopia and Menippean satire/anatomy. Chapter 2 considers late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century utopias and utopian satires such as Morris’s *News from Nowhere*, Wells’s *A Modern Utopia*, and Butler’s *Erewhon*. The economic and political writings of Marx and Engels
in the mid-nineteenth century led to widespread incorporation of socialist principles in the utopias of Morris and Wells as well as satire of capitalist corruption and excesses in that of Butler, following on More’s critiques of early capitalism in *Utopia*. Although Morris and Wells disagreed upon the role of technology in their respective utopian visions, the philosophical principles of Marx and Darwin resulted in widespread optimism among utopian authors such as Morris and Wells that humanity could perfect itself and achieve ideal living conditions for all, even though revolutionary struggle might well be necessary.

Chapter 3 examines the shift from early modernist utopianism to later modernist satire and dystopia in the wake of World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the establishment of a socialist world power in Soviet Russia, focusing on Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Huxley’s *Brave New World*. The longer-term results of the revolution led Russian authors such as Nikolai Berdyaev and Yevgeny Zamyatin to skepticism of socialist utopia. The establishment of fascist regimes espousing anti-Semitic and other racist ideologies in the interwar period led to further skepticism of utopianism, with some critics identifying uncanny commonalities between fascist and authoritarian socialist regimes. In turn, in British works such as those by Huxley and Orwell, revolution merely produced new oligarchical societies and new oligarchs, and increased production led only to increased consumerism applied on an uneven basis and, in Orwell, to increased destruction of wealth in perpetual limited warfare. Pessimism and cynicism toward authoritarianism in both capitalist and socialist forms thus largely superseded earlier utopian optimism.

Chapter 4 focuses on C. S. Lewis and the Inklings’ alternative reactions to both the utopian optimism of Morris and Wells and to the dystopias of Orwell and his contemporaries. Lewis, who wrote on More’s *Utopia* in *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* and was an
avid reader of Morris and Wells, was skeptical of the collectivist socialism of these authors. However, Lewis rejected also the traditional oligarchical structures of such institutions as the British public school system, concluding that oligarchy could perniciously survive the end of capitalism as envisioned in many earlier utopias and dystopias and as actualized in the USSR. The worldview Lewis came to share with Tolkien and their fellow Inklings further led him to see the individual as ultimately more significant than the state and to reject revolution as a means of redressing social inequity, views leading to an alternative paradigm of utopia and dystopia differing from both earlier utopian authors and contemporary secular dystopian authors. Lewis’s and Tolkien’s experiences during the time of the First World War also led them to increasing skepticism about human nature. Accordingly, their fiction critiques not only the oligarchical fascism of their day, but also the mechanization and dehumanization of the era across ideological boundaries as well as the use of force, however well-intentioned, to effect reformation. These critical considerations permeate Lewis’s Cosmic Trilogy in particular, in which the residents of the planets Malacandra and Perelandra enjoy utopian living conditions while human antagonists such as Weston, Devine, and the National Institute for Coordinated Experiments attempt to establish a dystopian regime on Earth and destabilize or destroy outright the utopias of the other planets.

In Chapter 5, the emphasis shifts first to Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange* and its ostensibly therapeutic model for criminal reform that instead dehumanizes its victims for the benefit of an increasingly authoritarian state. Burgess’s criticism further invokes the fourth- and fifth-century Christian theological debate between Pelagius and Augustine, identifying Pelagian optimism regarding humanity with the early utopians and Augustinian skepticism of human nature with the later dystopians. This Augustinianism, moreover, underlies the worldview not
only of Thomas More but also that of Lewis, Tolkien, and the Inklings and the utopian and
dystopian aspects of Lewis’s and Tolkien’s fiction. In the 1980s, following the political ascent of
conservatives such as Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan and politically active religious
conservatives, Commonwealth dystopias increasingly viewed fundamentalist religious theocracy
as a potential basis for totalitarian dystopia. In Atwood’s *Handmaid’s Tale*, the Gilead regime
appropriates religious imagery throughout its social and political structures of repression. The
dystopian satire here thus complicates that of Lewis, in which Lewis’s religious worldview
underpins both his utopian and dystopian visions. Atwood’s vision suggests in particular that
religious rhetoric and iconography also has the converse potential to underpin a dystopian system
of oligarchy. However, Lewis also endorses democracy and inveighs against the dangers of
theocracy underlying totalitarianism, suggesting that the worldview of Lewis complements rather
than contradicts that of Atwood.
CHAPTER 1

THEORY AND ANTECEDENTS

Although the tradition of authors speculating and arguing over ideal conditions for humanity dates in western philosophy to at least to Plato’s Republic (c. 380 BCE), in the British literary tradition Thomas More’s Utopia codified the representation of idealized fictional environments for equitable society. More’s work, and in particular his coinage of the term utopia (from the Greek ou + τοπος, or “no place”) for the eponymous ostensibly ideally governed land,1 established the paradigm for literature depicting an ideal state of society as well as the terminology not only for creating but also for analyzing such literature. John M. Rist emphasizes the influence of Erasmus on More and an earlier Latin title More had planned for Utopia:

[Although] the title of More’s book was eventually Utopia—a word apt to be translated as either Good-Country or No-Country—it was originally … titled and referred to as Nusquama2; many scholars have accepted that Utopia was the suggestion of Erasmus who assisted in its publication. Whether due to Erasmus or More, however, Utopia, with its untranslatable pun,3 was judged more appropriate for the eventual text we possess. Yet though the change of name is certain, we do not know and cannot assume that More and Erasmus had the same reasons for preferring Utopia. (752)

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1 Károly Pintér emphasizes that this emphasis on “spatial concept … an imaginary place [that] nonetheless has a certain concreteness and solidity” represents “a qualitative difference from an abstract philosophical treatise or a mere discussion of ideas to improve existing conditions.” Although Pintér also emphasizes that utopia is “always somewhere else, removed from the author’s empirical reality in space” (15), later utopian and dystopian authors from William Morris to Margaret Atwood have emphasized chronological rather than geographic separation from contemporary societies.

2 More derived the working title Nusquama from the Latin adverb nusquam, also meaning “nowhere” (Morrish 119).

3 The title Utopia also invokes the Greek ου + τοπος or “good place,” as numerous critics point out (Ferns 2; Wegner 81; Rabkin 140; Pintér 16). Among early critics, Sir Philip Sidney in Apologie for Poetrie (1595) refers to the work as “Sir Thomas Moores Eutopia” (qtd. in Pintér 58).
Like many later utopias, *Utopia* satirizes elements of its contemporary culture. Károly Pintér thus argues that “utopias have [an] ambivalent relationship to contemporary reality”:

Each utopia inevitably emerges from some sort of dissatisfaction with existing conditions; the author perceives certain problems or defects in his or her own society … and sets out to picture an alternative society, which may represent its author’s idea of a qualitatively better arrangement … or may serve as a satirical ploy to ridicule contemporary deficiencies … each and every utopia is connected in intricate ways to a contemporary topos (place), resulting in extraordinary combinations of mimesis and fantasy. (4)

Pintér argues that utopias satirically invert the world in which their authors produce them: this inversion “turns familiar and unquestioningly accepted habits, methods, institutions upside down (e.g., the use of gold for chamber pots and slave chains in More’s *Utopia*), with the result that they appear to the audience as weird, irrational, absurd, or simply as products of random chance rather than historical necessity or divine design” (37). Philip E. Wegner points out further the similarities between Utopia and the England of More’s era: “Utopia’s 54 cities are the equivalents of the 53 counties and the city of London in historical England; the strange ebb and flow of Utopia’s Anydrus River is the same as that of the Thames; and the description of the river’s bridge makes it almost identical to London Bridge” (85). Rist notes More’s “continuing endorsement of the age-long tradition (recognizable as far back as the *Canterbury Tales* and beyond) of hostility, indeed often contempt, for the mendicants (especially the Franciscans) as parasites and spongers” (748-49), as well as “the irresponsible behavior of the parasites and careerist wastrels at court and in the retinues of the nobility, and the treatment of indigent thieves

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4 However, Pintér argues that “authorial intent is a major problem for the critical interpretation of most utopias”: while utopia “often embodies a social ideal for its author, and as such, it is highly serious,” it “also employs irony and mockery to expose faults and abuses, and as such, it is satirical and comic.” Thus, with More’s *Utopia* and following utopias, it is often a matter of scholarly contention whether any given utopia is “an ideal to admire, an example to follow, a thought experiment to contemplate or a joke to laugh at—or perhaps all of these at the same time” (4). For instance, whether Raphael Hythloday’s observations and arguments should be taken at face value as More’s political philosophy is debatable at best.
reduced to penury by enclosures of public land for ‘man-eating sheep’ and thus forced to starve—or steal and be hanged” (778). Pintér thus argues that “the moral conditions of contemporary Europe” are criticized “explicitly in Book I and implicitly in Book II, where [More] satirized many of its follies by sketching a morally superior pagan society” (60). At times More’s satire approaches the polemic, as in Hythloday’s debate on crime and capital punishment before Cardinal Morton in Book I:

[The] law, [Hythloday] comments, is both savage in itself and obviously ineffective. … It is no good just saying that some people deliberately choose evil. Many thieves are too injured in battle to work, while others are former retainers sacked by their masters—masters who constantly demand more rent from their tenants to pay for their extravagant lifestyle—and for whom robbery is the sole skill by which they can avoid starvation. Others reach the same sorry state when enclosures destroy their subsistence agriculture. Thus Hythlodaeus—and therefore the author Thomas More—thinks wrongdoing is caused as much by social injustice—what we might call systemic injustice—as by personal wickedness. Original sin, that is, affects both the individual and the conventions of the society in which he lives. … It is quite absurd merely to increase the punishments for theft when the poor have no option but beg and steal; the law is neither just nor expedient. In Hythlodaeus’s view, if it were just, it would also be expedient. (Rist 779-80)

Thus, in Hythloday’s endorsement of the alternative legal systems of the Utopians, Polyclerites, and other fantastic societies, “the overall aim … is the rehabilitation of the guilty” (781). This therapeutic objective recurs throughout later utopias and dystopias as later authors agree to or find problematic elements in the therapeutic view and its underlying premises.5 Meanwhile, the recurrent satirical element of the utopian genre answers the charges of escapism against utopianism in particular and speculative fiction in general. M. Keith Booker points out that “far from being escapist and disconnected from reality, these texts tend to participate in reality in an active and productive way. More’s book was written at a time of great social and political change

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5 This polemic reaction to social injustice has also, to a degree, resulted in the marginalization of the utopia genre. Krishan Kumar argues that “few utopias stand out as great works of literature” because the “didactic purpose overwhelms any literary aspiration” (qtd. in Firchow 1).
and turmoil; it attempted to intervene in its contemporary historical moment by indicating desirable directions these changes might take” (*Dystopian* 14).

However, the satirical elements of *Utopia* hold a mirror not only to the England of More’s day but also to problematic elements of the liberal tendencies the western world has inherited from Renaissance and Enlightenment-era Europe. John J. Pierce notes that the society of Utopia “inspires at least mixed feelings in modern readers”:

> It is a welfare state, in which all receive the necessities of life (food, clothing, housing, education, even medical treatment) as a birthright. … On the other hand, there is an almost total lack of freedom and privacy—citizens are encouraged to inform on each other, Big Brother style; Draconian punishments are inflicted for such offenses as fornication and adultery. Slavery, and even war, are also tolerated. (11-12)

Titus Techera suggests that *Utopia* is “the very picture of an egalitarian society ruled administratively by experts whose claim to legitimacy is their wisdom,” much like the later technocratic classes of H. G. Wells’s *A Modern Utopia*, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, and George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the think tank behind the Gilead revolution in Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*; and even the National Institute for Coordinated Experiments in C. S. Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength*. Utopia as a nation is “incredibly wealthy and isolated from other regimes by a sea. But more striking still is Utopian foreign policy, based on … an aversion to having any Utopian citizen die in war mixed with a compulsion to go to war and to intervene in the affairs of just about every neighboring regime pretty much at all times.” Techera points out also that “slaves … do all the dirty work. The poor and criminals of other countries

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6 Rist points out that Utopus, the “military commander turned philosopher-king,” conquers the land of “the original Abraxans, whose very name suggests a Gnostic heaven” and names the new nation and its population after himself, anticipating the cults of personality of the World Controllers and Big Brother in *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, respectively. Rist further notes that to do so, Utopus “has taken advantage … of their religious disputes” (753), prefiguring the role of religion in establishing and sustaining dystopia in *Lord of the Flies*, *A Clockwork Orange*, and especially *The Handmaid’s Tale*. 
seek to escape to a better fate by becoming Utopian slaves, which of course puts a different color on Emma Lazarus’s famous sonnet” (29). Furthermore, “those who suffer from chronic pain and incurable diseases are encouraged by everyone to commit suicide, both to put an end to the suffering and because they are a burden to Utopia. … Utopian pacifism is ruthless to those who don’t fit in its picture of the sweet life.” Techera thus argues that many elements of Utopia anticipate practices in later dystopias as well as the most dystopian elements of real-world political regimes:

To avoid dangerous wars and to preserve the tranquility of the perfect city, the rulers would have to cause civil wars in other cities and favor factions according to their own interests. … [In] his discussion of military discipline, More suggests there is a considerable difference between Utopian pacifism, which would primarily justify defensive wars, and the reality of Utopian foreign policy, which includes wars of regime change to rid the world of tyrannies; also gunboat diplomacy … More leaves little doubt that the ultimate consequence of commercial power and a meddling foreign policy is worldwide empire: wherever commerce attaches its interests and attracts some of its more enterprising citizens, inevitably a quarrel will give Utopians an opportunity to exercise their typical combination of self-righteousness and self-interest. (30)

Accordingly, German critics of the 1920s argued that in Utopia “More’s agenda was to propagate English colonization of North America, and in the description of Utopian practices of planting surplus population overseas, as well as the description of Utopian methods of waging war, he provided moral justification of subsequent English efforts to build a colonial empire” (Pintér 61). Techera concludes that in Utopia “everything is exaggerated— for clarity, but also to

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7 Techera here refers to Emma Lazarus’s “The New Colossus” (1883), in which the “Mother of Exiles” appeals to the “tired … poor … huddled masses yearning to breathe free, / The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.” That slavery awaits these individuals in Utopia complicates the “golden door” imagery of Lazarus, though Utopia obviously predates by centuries the establishment of the United States, the Ellis Island immigration facilities, the Statue of Liberty, and Lazarus’s poem. Lazarus’s paradigm of immigration has in the Trump era become a subject of revisionism and controversy, as Trump Administration official Ken Cuccinelli suggested amending Lazarus’s invitation to “Give me your tired and your poor who can stand on their own two feet, and who will not become a public charge.” However, historian Annie Polland argues that Lazarus’s paradigm was controversial in her own day, as her poem was contemporaneous with widespread anti-Semitism and the establishment of policies such as the Chinese Exclusion Act (Fang). The immigration and slavery policies of Utopia thus anticipate the nativism and ostensible macroeconomic concerns of past and present United States immigration policies.
suggest the consequences of hedonistic pacifism. Domestic tranquility dispels belief in the tragic
carer of political affairs, makes people blindly arrogant, and encourages rulers to use their
power extravagantly in wars where abstract principle overrules considerations of prudence,
necessity, and the wisdom of minding one’s own business” (31). Rist similarly identifies satire in
Utopia’s advocacy of the suicide of the infirm and in Utopian military practices, arguing that
More “would hardly have approved of the policy of targeted assassinations of enemy
commanders or the use of bribery to encourage potential assassins, a device much favored by the
Utopians on the rational if expectably consequentialist grounds that such killings will probably
reduce the bloodletting in the longer term”:

Although More would have applauded Utopian unwillingness to slaughter prisoners or to
ravage enemy land, he would have hesitated over their bribing enemy troops, their
regular use of ruthless Zapoletan mercenaries (who would remind his contemporaries of the … Swiss), or their contemptuous unconcern whether these savages lived or died so long as they were effective. In this as in other areas, the Utopians have a very restricted, if by Machiavelli’s standards rational, view of the value of human life—and an often cynical view of the relationship in public life between morality and expediency, as one would expect of Epicurean utilitarians. (769)

These satirical elements in Utopia reflect More’s Augustinian skepticism of human
nature, anticipating Anthony Burgess’s later analysis of Pelagianism and Augustinianism as
underlying utopian and dystopian analyses of humanity. Rist argues that scholarship of More has
often failed to “set his account of humanity, let alone his ironic pessimism about the possibilities
of radical reform, in the broadly Augustinian tradition about ‘this darkness of social life’ to
which it so clearly belongs”; thus, these scholars of More argue for the “ambition of More’s
eventual project as a major political (and religious) manifesto, though his original intentions
were more immediately satirical and more limited, even if similarly oriented” (739). However,
according to Rist, “Much of More’s concern for the common good in both books of Utopia is to
find ways—by revised habits of mind, by laws and regulations—for at least controlling” the
effects of original sin and humanity’s fallen condition (745-46). As a result, Rist argues, “More’s
account of human nature … rules out any possibility of an adequate, let alone a perfect political
regime”:

One of the features of Augustine’s account of “this darkness of social life” is that good
men will always be confronted with choices, such as, for More, no longer to remain a
spectator of the follies of mankind but to try to diminish them even minimally. Good men
would wish not to have to make such choices, where any choice they might make they
would have to regret, but one of which—deliberately or by default—they will have to
adopt. (784)

More’s Augustinianism thus anticipates much of the ambiguously utopian satire of the late
nineteenth century, such as Samuel Butler’s Erewhon, and the pessimism of twentieth-century
dystopia such as that of George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four:

More can satirize ideal constitutions and analyze the gross inadequacies of existing ones … he knows that the honest man in politics is like a lamb thrown to the wolves (or the
man-eating sheep). As he knows that Augustine has told him, this is part of what original
sin has brought us to; the very sense of ambiguity is part of the penal condition of the
human race. From that condition ideal political schemes offer no release—and … if
attempted would probably even make things worse. (Rist 784)

This Augustinian pessimism about human nature, along with its more secular philosophical
counterparts, has led to a tendency of utopian literature to adopt a secular, rational paradigm of
the ideal society. Darko Suvin defines utopia as “the verbal construction of a particular …
community where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and individual relationships are organized
according to a more perfect principle than in the author’s community, this construction based on
estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis” (49). Wegner emphasizes that
this definition “marks the difference between this genre and … myths of the Golden Age or
millenarian visions: these communities are very much presented as a part of (or potentially a part
of) our world, subject to the same natural laws, and the products of human rather than divine or mystical labors. In short, Utopian is a materialist rather than idealist genre” (80).

Rist’s analysis of More’s Augustinianism also prefigures the Augustinianism of More’s fellow Catholic J. R. R. Tolkien, as exemplified by Gandalf in The Lord of the Rings. When Frodo Baggins laments his situation as bearer of the One Ring, which entails risks of seemingly inevitable death or corruption, and Frodo wishes the circumstances were wholly otherwise (cf. 310), Gandalf responds, “So do I … and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us” (50). At Orthanc, Gandalf and Saruman approach the dilemma of Morus (More as a character in Utopia) and Hythloday in response to Sauron’s prospective rise to power, and Saruman advocates working within Sauron’s power structure:

But we must have power, power to order all things as we will, for that good which only the Wise can see … As the Power grows, its proved friends will also grow; and the Wise, such as you and I, may with patience come at last to direct its courses, to control it. We can bide our time, we can keep our thoughts in our hearts, deploring maybe evils done by the way, but approving the high and ultimate purpose: Knowledge, Rule, Order; all the things that we have so far striven in vain to accomplish … There need not be, there would not be, any real change in our designs, only in our means. (252-53)

Gandalf, however, rejects this advice out of hand, dismissing it as “speeches … in the mouths of emissaries sent from Mordor to deceive the ignorant” (253). Tom Shippey notes that “Saruman, the collaborator, the wizard who goes over to the other side because it seems the stronger, would no doubt have called himself a ‘realist’ … though that would not make him one” (xxii). Shippey further suggests that Saruman is at once “the most modernistic, and in a way the most familiar” of the voices in “The Council of Elrond,” the chapter of The Lord of the Rings in which Gandalf relates this encounter. Shippey explains:
The idea of anyone, however wise, persuading Sauron, would sound simply silly if it were said in so many words. No sillier, though, than the repeated conviction of many British intellectuals before and after this time that they could somehow get along with Stalin, or with Hitler. … Saruman, indeed, talks exactly like too many politicians. It is impossible to work out exactly what he means because of the abstract nature of his speech; in the end it is doubtful whether he understands himself. (75)

Shippey thus concludes that Saruman “is the most contemporary figure in Middle-earth, both politically and linguistically. He is on the road to ‘doublethink’ (which Orwell was to invent, or describe, at almost exactly the same time)” (76).

On a broader level, More’s Catholicism underlies much of the structure of *Utopia*. According to Edward James, “More’s utopian society, not accidentally, is like a Benedictine monastery, although with both men and women and without the celibacy. All his utopians wear monastic habits, and eat and work together communally; all work for the common good; all watch each other closely for signs of disobedience. More … believed that original sin had to be restrained by strict laws” (220). Although the “high degree of religious toleration” in *Utopia* “seems to propose the heretical idea that there is more than one true religion, and they are all equally valid ways to achieve salvation,” this element of *Utopia* “does not seem to correspond to the picture(s) of Thomas More presented by biographers and historians” (Pintér 47). More’s early biographers focused on “More’s life as an example of Christian virtue and his solid heroism in defense of Catholic doctrines” (48), while English Protestants often emphasized More’s later suppression of Protestantism and heresy and cast him as “a fanatic and cruel inquisitor of Protestants” (50).

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8 In this respect, Saruman’s style of speaking also resembles that of Wither, the deputy director of the N.I.C.E., in Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength*.
9 Pintér, following R. W. Chambers, suggests that ideas of religious tolerance in *Utopia* “were not heretical since More emphatically described an ideally wise and prudent state of pagans who are unfamiliar with Christ’s teaching…. This system, however, has nothing to do with More’s own religious convictions; therefore it has no relevance upon his subsequent attitude toward Protestants” (59).
The question of whether *Utopia* represents a face-value blueprint for an ideal society has been the subject of considerable controversy. Pintér suggests that the argument for *Utopia* as a political blueprint is “greatly weakened by the fact that *Utopia* was written in Latin and never appeared in England during More’s lifetime, a rather ineffective way to propagate one’s political reform ideas in one’s own country.” Further, Pintér notes that “no persuasive evidence is known to support the claim that More ever seriously attempted to promote or suggest reform proposals similar in spirit to the social arrangements in Utopia when, as Lord Chancellor, he was one of the more powerful officials of the country” (61). Rist argues that More’s lack of reformism was at least in part a function of Augustinian pessimism toward human nature:

[Dislike] of abstraction discouraged a more than limited attention to the theoretical questions which should underlie and justify any sort of practical programming: not least, as both Plato and Aristotle recognized, in that they evade the basic question of the nature and intelligibility of the concept of justice itself. Such neglect, as the Plato of the first book of the *Republic* well knew, leaves the door open for cynical and ultimately nihilism in ethics as well as totalitarianism in political theory. … In their comparative neglect of foundationalism, both More and Machiavelli are modern, even postmodern, thinkers. (740)

Rist also cautions against taking Hythloday’s descriptions of Utopia as offering an agenda for social improvement, noting that Hythloday’s name, like the title of the land of Utopia, contains ambiguous potential meanings: “Hythlodaeus in Greek can suggest both a purveyor of (perhaps harmful) nonsense, and a destroyer of nonsense” (758; cf. Pintér 81).

Not least should we attend to passages where even Hythlodaeus finds fault with the Utopian world which he so obviously admires, since that surely will tell us that whatever Thomas More the author thinks of Utopia as a whole, at least those aspects of its civic life are unwelcome to him. Above all we should note that when discussing Utopian ideas of morality, Hythlodaeus says that he has no time to consider whether their views are correct or not. He has agreed only to describe them, not to defend them. … We must also pay close attention to More’s additions to the conclusion of the final version of his text, where he severely criticizes the Utopian world with an eye to the very different considerations in the forefront of his mind now that he has written book 1 and is completing his revised project. (751)
Kenneth M. Roemer likewise identifies Hythloday as a “wise fool” (136), meanwhile arguing that Morus or “the persona ‘More’” is “characterized by a combination of open-mindedness and skepticism” (137). The existence of Morus in the narrative structure of Utopia poses a dilemma, according to Pintér:

Hythloday is opposed in the debate of Book I not by another fictitious character but by More himself, who, while continually praising Hythloday’s wisdom and intelligence, is far from agreeing with all his ideas …. If Hythloday is merely a disguise of More the author, what is the function of More the debater in the story? What does he represent, whose ideas does he express? … where a literary persona of the author is pitted against a fictitious character, it is very difficult if not impossible to make an incontestable case for either one or the other speaking the author’s mind. (46)

Wegner further suggests that the name of Hythloday poses a dilemma:

Hythlodaeus’ Greek surname … has been translated as “expert in trifles” or “well-learned in nonsense”—but does this mean that we dismiss his vision … or does More mean in this way to highlight the fact that from within the dominant perspective of his moment, Hythlodaeus’ insights can only appear as nonsense, thus ironically commenting on the narrowness and lack of imagination to be found in those who rule? (83)

Rist posits that Utopia “was originally largely satire, even self-mocking satire, but with serious intent, while in the enlarged version¹⁰ More wanted to propose a specific indictment not only of Hythlodaeus’s unwillingness … to act as an adviser of princes, but of his whole approach, and that of his predecessors, to political philosophy, for we live in an Augustinian world, not in an idealized pre-Christian society to be regulated by unguided rationality” (753). Martin Buber similarly notes that for More, “it was … possible to mingle serious instruction with incongruous jesting, and, with supercilious irony, to allow a picture of ‘very absurd’ institutions to rub shoulders with such as he ‘wishes rather than hopes’ to see copied” (281), and B. G. Knepper points in particular to the “notion of prenuptial stripping of the bride and groom for the same sort

¹⁰ Rist argues that More’s “original intentions” for Utopia “were more immediately satirical and more limited” than his “eventual project as a major political (and religious) manifesto” (739), using More’s working title of Nusquama to refer to the former and Utopia to refer to the latter.
of physical examination appropriate in the purchase of a horse, a thing in the case of prospective marriage partners at once sensible and outrageous” that “must seem ironic, unless one is to presume the subtle and urbane More lacked a sense of humor” (20-21). Chris Ferns likewise argues that *Utopia* “contains what are surely deeply serious considerations of both the nature of good government and the role of the philosopher in society—yet it also contains elements suggesting that the whole work is little more than an elaborate scholarly joke (an impression which More’s subsequent correspondence reinforces)” (3). Accordingly, Rist views Book II as “proposals (however farcically presented) for some sort of radical, if flawed and impractical, dream of a hopefully perfect society in Europe, and more particularly in England” that “demonstrate the crazy impracticability of such Utopian, would-be Platonic, sometimes attractive, but morally mixed schemes—the more obviously undesirable characteristics of which their (Epicurean/utilitarian) advocates would tend to downplay” (757). In Book I, thus, More “not only considers the Utopian polity flawed and impractical, but presents what he sees as the only honorable political course for a Christian who realizes the religious and psychological reasons why it is both fantastical and undesirable,” though More acknowledges the ultimately lethal danger this course posed for him in his service to Henry VIII (Rist 757). Thus, H. V. S. Ogden concludes, *Utopia* is “at bottom a book on ethics” (qtd. in Bittner 247). However, the dialogue between Morus and Hythloday leads to an overwhelming multiplicity of views on the ethics being endorsed. As C. S. Lewis concludes, “All seem to be agreed that [*Utopia*] is a great

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11 This question of practicality has remained a subject of scholarly debate concerning utopias since More’s day. Pintér notes that the definition of *utopia* includes that of an “impossibly ideal scheme … for social improvement” (14), citing Lord Macaulay’s axiom that an “acre in Middlesex is better than a principality in Utopia” (qtd. 17). Pintér points out that Marx and Engels, for instance, rejected the writings of what they described as “utopian Socialists” (5), though later Marxist philosophers and literary critics such as Ernst Bloch and Darko Suvin have been instrumental to criticism of utopia (5-6), and Marx himself appealed in *Das Kapital* (1867) to More’s “sheep-parable” in Book I of *Utopia* as a paradigm of capital accumulation and impoverishment of the proletariat (Pintér 51).
book, but hardly any two agree as to its real significance: we approach it through a cloud of contradictory eulogies” (167).

The ambiguity of the satirical dialogue between Morus and Hythloday further complicates both previous paradigms of dialogue and those of later utopias and dystopias. Pintér argues that utopian authors often “attempt to suppress … ambiguity by explicit rhetorical means, namely by staging a dialogue between two characters, one representing the status quo, the other the utopia, and rigging the argument in such a way as the spokesman of the utopia should emerge as the winner” (37). However, Ferns points out that this didactic tendency in fact represents a departure from the role of dialogue in More:

More’s Utopia is in fact most unusual in the degree of tension that exists between the conflicting points of view espoused by the narrator and Hythloday; more generally, the Renaissance dialogue … uses the appearance of debate or discussion as a rhetorical tool. One speaker either asks questions designed purely to set up the authoritative statements of the other … or else voices reservations or opposing arguments whose rebuttal only strengthens the case of the speaker who represents the author’s own point of view. … Serving a mainly didactic intent, its effect is to foreclose dialogue, rather than encourage it. … Rooted in such conventions, utopian narrative is often in fact anti-dialogic, rather than dialectical, enacting the suppression and marginalization of other voices, rather than allowing them free and creative interaction. (23-24)

Mikhail Bakhtin observes that the Socratic dialogue “was transformed into a simple form for expounding already found, ready-made irrefutable truth” and “degenerated completely into a question and answer form for training neophytes” (qtd. in Ferns 24). Bakhtin reveals the possibility that other forms of dialogue can be appropriated by what educational theorists such as Paolo Freire have identified as the “banking concept” of education (Micheletti). In contrast, More’s dialogue and the less didactic utopian dialogues based upon it challenge conventional pedagogy with a more democratic alternate paradigm, with critical opinion divided on whether Hythloday or Morus is the more persuasive (Pintér 77).
More’s *Utopia* serves as a foundation for understanding the utopias of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries not only as the namesake and primary codifier of the genre of utopia but also as occupying a liminal space between the genre of the novel and what Northrop Frye has described as the genre of the Menippean satire or the anatomy. Frye describes this genre as having been “allegedly invented by a Greek cynic named Menippus” whose works are lost but who influenced Lucian and Apuleius (309), and he identifies Erasmus, Rabelais, Voltaire, and Swift as key figures in the history of the genre (308). According to Frye, “The purely moral type [of satire] is a serious vision of society as a single intellectual pattern, in other words a Utopia,” and the “short form of the Menippean satire is usually a dialogue or colloquy” (310). Rist notes that among More’s works of translation into Latin were four satires by Lucian, including one titled *Menippus*, in which “the hero, the third-century Cynic Menippus of Gadara, descends to Hades in search of true wisdom … only to discover in the indistinguishable dead the vanity of human wishes, thus mocking pretentious, confused, hypocritical, and self-important moralists (for More, read scholastics)” (755). Jean-François Vallée further emphasizes the liminality of *Utopia*, arguing it to be “an essentially transitional work” (472), and Marshall McLuhan describes *Utopia* as “a bridge over the turbulent river of scholastic philosophy … on the frontiers

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12 Lyman Tower Sargent, who defines *utopia* more broadly than Suvin as “a nonexistent society described in considerable detail and located in time and space” (qtd. in Wegner 80), classifies *eutopia* roughly in Suvin’s terms and *dystopia* as a genre in which “the author intends a contemporaneous reader to see the society described in the text ‘as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived.’” Sargent further defines *Utopian satire* as “a criticism of that contemporary society” and *anti-Utopia* as “a criticism of Utopianism … or of some particular *eutopian* vision. Sargent also posits the “critical Utopian” vision as “better than contemporary society but with difficult problems that the described society may or may not be able to solve and which takes a critical view of the Utopian genre” (qtd. in Wegner 81). Gary Saul Morson points to both More’s *Utopia* and Wells’s *A Modern Utopia* as “meta-utopias,” describing them as “works which, notwithstanding the authoritarian character of their imaginary sociopolitical structures, are designedly open to multiple and contradictory readings” (Ferns 9). Sargent’s description of utopia as “described in considerable detail” further differentiates the genre from such related works as the medieval Cockaigne as exemplified in *The Land of Cokaygne* in the Kildare Poems (c. 1330-50) (Wegner 81).
between the manuscript and the typographical worlds” (qtd. in Vallée 472). Rist likewise argues for hybridity and liminality in More:

[More] combined a traditionally Augustinian view of fallen human nature with an intended but gradual project—soon to be aborted by the Reformation—for personal, social, and religious reconstruction. Like Machiavelli, he lived half in the medieval and half in the modern (or premodern) world, and though the two men drew very different conclusions, they began with similar accounts of social and political life. Machiavelli, however, showed no interest in theological accounts of human degeneracy. (740)

Lewis Mumford similarly argues that it “was in the midst of a … period of disorder and violence that Sir Thomas More laid the foundations for his imaginary commonwealth: Utopia was the bridge by which he sought to span the gap between the old order of the Middle Age, and the new interests and institutions of the Renaissance” (31). Rist further notes the effect of “the discovery of the vastness of our planet itself, very noticeable in Utopia where the new Ulysses, Raphael Hythlodaeus, has accompanied Amerigo Vespucci on three of his four major voyages”:

The old world of limited horizons—the village or at least the town, with heaven above and hell below, where the local graveyard shared the lives of the living with those of the dead—was, if not immediately, yet gradually to disappear. Hitherto unknown peoples in distant places [were] indications that the ordained parameters of medieval society were gone forever. (749-50)

Pierce thus casts Utopia as a synthesis of the “travel tale” and Platonic dialogue (8), suggesting that it shares generic similarities with such works of satire, social commentary, and even theological commentary as Gulliver’s Travels, Robinson Crusoe, and Pilgrim’s Progress (35). The expanding horizons of Vespucci and other explorers influenced the geography of Utopia and later works such as Samuel Butler’s Erewhon and Wells’s A Modern Utopia. Meanwhile, Utopia and its literary offspring occupy a hybrid space between medieval collectivism and modern individualism.13 Bulent Somay argues that in utopias such as those of More and William Morris, 

13 Pintér, analyzing the “social or communal element” of the definition of utopia, notes that “a place can be a locality in nature uninhabited by humans and ‘state or condition’ may refer to a single individual as well as a human
the “utopian longing” which arose from the people’s collective imagination throughout history was … enclosed in a fictive utopian locus which arose from the individual imagination of the author, who presented it to her or his audience in a finished, unchanging, form” (qtd. in Franko 77). Tom Shippey further identifies this synthesis of the medieval and the modern in Tolkien’s legendarium, arguing that the hobbits are “creatures of the early modern world … drawn, like Bilbo, into the far more archaic and heroic world of dwarves and dragons, wargs and were-bears. However Tolkien, as a philologist, and also as an infantry veteran, was deeply conscious of the strong continuity between that heroic world and the modern one. Much of the vocabulary of Old English is exactly the same as that of modern English; many of its situations seem to recur” (xxviii). Shippey suggests, for instance, that Bilbo’s conflict with the Sackville-Bagginse reflects “the medieval take-over of the English language by the Norman French” and that Bilbo “replies to Gollum’s ancient riddles with modern ones” (9-10, 26). However, his adventures push him more toward the medieval side: naming his sword Sting is “something much more likely for a saga-hero to do than for a modern bourgeois” (29). Conversely, Bard the heroic dragon-slayer, according to Shippey, adopts hints of modern leadership: “what Bard does is not prepare his own armoury, like Beowulf, but start to organize a collective defence, like a twentieth-century infantry officer. He has the whole town filling pots with water, readying arrows and darts, breaking down the bridge—the Middle-earth equivalent of digging trenches, collecting ammunition, organizing damage-control parties.” Thus, the defense “seems more like the First World War which Tolkien himself fought in than any legendary battle from the Dark Ages” (40).

community” (15). Thus, works involving nonhuman characters such as the hnau of C. S. Lewis’s Out of the Silent Planet and limited populations such as Tinidril and Tor in Lewis’s Perelandra, in which Perelandra’s utopian nature stands or falls with Tinidril’s individual decisions, need not be excluded from the genre of utopia.
This liminality has in turn inspired further liminality in later utopias and dystopias. Although the genre of the novel has enjoyed primacy among works of prose fiction in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the utopias and dystopias of the era have often juxtaposed elements of the novel and of the Menippean satire. *Utopia*, a text that significantly predates those by Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding often considered the first novels, exhibits numerous proto-novelistic traits that place it as a precursor to the novel. J. Paul Hunter asserts that novels typically emphasize “awareness of the process of thought and feeling that affect individuals in relation to their world and their experiences in it” (24). In contrast, Book II of *Utopia* mostly eschews a narrative of Hythloday’s experiences on the island in favor of a more systematic profile of the Utopians’ lifestyle, except when the former usefully illustrates elements of the latter, as when Hythloday describes the introduction of Catholicism to the island (More 85). However, individual subjectivities are at the heart of the debate between More, Giles, and Hythloday in Book I of *Utopia*, as the characters discuss everything from the political to the personal, with emphasis on More and Giles’s attempt to persuade Hythloday to enter the service of a king. Furthermore, Hythloday’s antagonism toward the nascent capitalism of England anticipates the tension between the early novel and the capitalist society in which it emerged. Marina MacKay notes that conventional scholarship locating the birthplace of the novel in eighteenth-century Britain credits the nation’s early adoption of capitalism with making the new genre possible, enabling wider dissemination of printed texts and encouraging private consumption of those texts (24-26). Defoe’s protagonist, however, like More’s, expresses skepticism of the new money-driven society: although Crusoe initially places himself in harm’s way to make his fortune (MacKay 101), after his shipwreck he finds money “not worth … taking off of the ground” (qtd. in MacKay 54).
Theorists of the novel frequently emphasize traits such as coherence, familiarity, and contemporaneity in determining whether to categorize works of prose fiction as novels. Although More uses the framing device of the meeting between More, Hythloday, and Giles in Antwerp to lend coherence, defined by Hunter as “a narrative strand [uniting] the whole” (MacKay 22), as well as a degree of contemporaneity and familiarity to his text (More 10-11), the setting of Book II of *Utopia* in particular flouts Hunter’s criteria of contemporaneity and familiarity in presenting a distant island unexplored by westerners prior to the arrival of Hythloday, an island in which social, political, and religious systems are far removed from those most familiar to More’s western readers. However, MacKay notes that the dystopian literary descendants of *Utopia* written by authors such as Orwell, Huxley, and Atwood utilize settings lacking in contemporaneity and familiarity (113), categorizing the twentieth-century dystopias as novels despite their lack of contemporaneity and familiarity, or perhaps because these dystopias often hold a mirror to contemporary society. While modern utopian and dystopian fiction is not universally accepted as novelistic—Frye categorizes such works as Butler’s Erewhon books and Huxley’s *Brave New World* instead as Menippean satire, though he categorizes other works of each author as novels (308)—*Utopia* and its literary and rhetorical offspring nevertheless have exerted a profound influence on the genre of the novel.

Genre theorists further emphasize credibility in categorizing prose works as novels. This criterion dictates that “characters and plots operate in believable ways” (MacKay 22). Hythloday in *Utopia* admits that since everything to be learned about the exotic lands he has visited comes from his own description, acceptance or rejection of the conditions in Utopia and elsewhere stands or falls with Hythloday’s credibility. Hythloday tells More, “[You] should have been with me in Utopia, and seen with your own eyes their manners and customs as I did.… If you had
seen them, you would frankly confess that you had never seen a people well governed anywhere but there” (More 37). Further, he anticipates disbelief over the Utopians’ ignoble use of gold and silver in constructing chamber pots, chains to bind slaves, and ornaments to disgrace criminals (54-55). Here, credibility as a criterion for defining the novel raises an obvious question: credible by whom, and to what ends? If literary theorists deem Crusoe’s chronicles of shipwreck and survival credible,\(^\text{14}\) then it becomes difficult simply to dismiss out of hand Hythloday’s maritime adventures with Vespucci and his return to Portugal via Ceylon and Calicut (More 11), particularly given More’s explicit ridicule of fantastic tales of sea monsters and island-dwelling cannibals: “Scyllas, ravenous Celaenos, man-eating Lestrygonians, and that sort of monstrosity you can hardly avoid, but well and wisely trained citizens you will hardly find anywhere” (13). As Ferns points out, “In an age of exploration, such narratives had a particular immediacy. Indeed, for More and his circle … this was not simply part of the appeal, but also part of the joke: it was actually possible that someone might take it seriously, as a factual account. More’s Raphael Hythloday … is hardly less credible than many other visitors to exotic parts who returned home to tell the world of the wonders they had witnessed” (19). That More dismisses the fantastic for the sake of the fantastic, focusing instead on “customs from which our own cities, nations, races, and kingdoms might take example in order to correct their errors” (13), underscores the fact that even where elements of Utopia may nominally lack a degree of credibility, the apparent incredibility exists not merely for entertainment but to serve a literary,

\(^{14}\) Defoe, writing in an age when the novel was a more unambiguously recognized genre of text, emphasized credibility but rejected the categorization of Robinson Crusoe as a novel, alleging his text to be a “true story” while the novel represented “a lie, insipid and … created to corrupt men’s hearts and their tastes” (qtd. in Robert 3), echoing both More’s impatience for the gratuitously fantastic and his framing of Hythloday’s experiences in Utopia within a real world replete with sociopolitical debate and convoluted realpolitik (More 17-21, 28-30), populated by such historical figures as Giles, Henry VIII, Cuthbert Tunstall, and Cardinal Morton (9, 16).
rhetorical, or philosophical purpose. In analyzing the Utopians’ use of gold, for example, Lewis argues that “taken simply as satiric invention leading up to the story of the child and the ambassadors, it is delicious” (170).

On balance, however, More’s *Utopia* focuses on providing an anatomy of Utopia rather than offering a narrative of Hythloday’s experiences therein. Book II offers a thorough profile of the economic, social, political, and religious life of the Utopians rather than a direct narration of Hythloday’s journey through the island, and Book I fits Frye’s characterization of the utopia in general as Menippean satire or as anatomy, as Hythloday, Morus, and Giles act “as mouthpieces of the ideas they represent,” resulting in “dramatic interest…in a conflict of ideas rather than of character” (309-10). Thus, to the extent that later utopias and dystopias have adopted novelistic elements from the surrounding literary milieu, these elements have often represented a departure from the precedent of anatomy or Menippean satire in More’s *Utopia*. Conversely, to the degree that newer utopias and dystopias retain elements of *Utopia*, theorists of the novel often classify these works as non-novelistic, as in Frye’s categorization of the Erewhon books and *Brave New World*.

Modern literary sensibilities have also affected the production, reading, and reception of *Utopia* in the age of the novel. Vallée points out that “the countless modern editions of Thomas More’s *Utopia* are very different from the first editions published in the early sixteenth century”:

For example, all the letters, poems, and engravings contributed by other Humanists (such as Erasmus) that frame the main text on both ends in these early editions have been almost systematically eliminated from modern editions, as is also the case for the numerous annotations that one finds in the margins of the early avatars of the book. These modern amputations and reconfigurations of More’s book are symptomatic of the individualistic, linear, and sealed-off conception of the “book” and the “author” that came to dominate … from the seventeenth century on. A more careful look at the four earliest editions of *Utopia* (published between 1516 and 1518), however, reveals the
highly sophisticated … textual and editorial structure of this fundamentally “dialogocentric” … Humanist work. (471-72)

Vallée argues that these letters, engravings, and other paratextual elements are integral to a proper understanding of the dialogue *Utopia* as a whole represents:

The lengthy description of the *island* of Utopia in the second book, for which the work is mostly known today and which can, with many caveats, be seen as a precursor of modern rational, lineal, and homogenized space, is in fact only one element of the book of *Utopia* that, on closer examination, could be seen as an extremely complex, multilayered, and profoundly dialogical attempt at “exploding” the book, a fact that is not visible in the modern (non-scholarly) editions that, as we have mentioned already, leave out or displace much of the original textual and iconographic material. … One can identify no fewer than seven layers and four axes of dialogue in and around *Utopia*. (472)

Further, these elements anticipate those of more recent dystopias such as the Appendix on Newspeak in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the conference proceedings examining the provenance of Offred/June’s narrative at the end of Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, while dialogue as a whole remains central to narratives from More to Bellamy to William Morris and beyond (Ferns 23).

The temporal and conceptual distance between More’s work and that of nineteenth- and twentieth-century utopian and dystopian authors and critics also presents critical difficulties. Peter Edgerly Firchow notes, for instance, that “earlier utopias were usually written by philosophers and by what today we would call social scientists, e.g., Plato, More, Campanella, Bacon, etc.,” and he argues that these utopias do not aim to satisfy modern or novelistic literary tastes: “Given what they were, their aim naturally was not so much to persuade their readers of the fictional reality of their characters or even their ideal states but rather to depict the sociopolitical features of those ideal states themselves. Their utopias were (and are) social treatises in fictional guise, rather than literary fictions containing a social component.” By contrast, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries “utopian literature tended to be written by
literary people … mostly professional novelists,” while “critiques of utopian literature have tended to be written by people interested in, and usually also trained in, the social sciences” (189). According to Firchow, “The disjunction between these two groups has led … to a misunderstanding of the aims of utopian literature in the modern period, and to a disregard for, or at least to a neglect of, the essential literary values of most contemporary utopias” (189). Merritt Abrash, for instance, laments that utopias often fail to develop character on an individual or social level, citing the utopias of More and Edward Bellamy:

Utopian novels have traditionally been more specific about institutions (or lack of them) than about the corresponding individual and mass psychologies. In *Utopia*, More imparts all kinds of information about how Utopian society operates and its prevailing religious and philosophical beliefs, but little sense of the Utopians themselves aside from their relentless commitment to propriety and keen conviction of superiority to all other peoples. *Looking Backward* is notorious for the shallowness of its portrayal of personal and social life in A.D. 2000, in sharp contrast to the depth and passion of Bellamy’s vision of a new economic and class order. No doubt this emphasis on how a society works is an occupational hazard of utopian novelists. (234)

Moreover, reading utopian works across different eras exacerbates this difficulty: “any individual Utopian vision appears as ‘more perfect’ only in comparison to the society of its historical moment, and we run into great [difficulty] in our reading if we forget this context and evaluate these visions according to the values and practices of our own cultural and social moment” (Wegner 80). Thus, while to modern readers “traditional utopia seems regimented, lacking in freedom, [to] a contemporary of More or Campanella, their more perfect societies offered in fact a great deal of freedom—albeit mainly a freedom from a range of existing constraints, rather than ‘individual freedom’ as it is currently conceived in western society. What such utopias offered was stability, security, freedom from hunger, from endless toil, from war” (Ferns 14)—even if,
as in More, the “endless toil” and war are merely sloughed off onto slave and foreign mercenary classes.\textsuperscript{15}

More’s \textit{Utopia} thus represents a model from which the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century utopias depart significantly. Although these utopias adopt the terminology of More outright, as in Wells’s \textit{A Modern Utopia}, or allude to its “nowhere” etymology, as in Butler’s \textit{Erewhon} and Morris’s \textit{News from Nowhere}, and they follow More’s lead in satirical inversion of contemporary society, they frequently abandon More’s Augustinian view of original sin and pessimism toward human nature in favor of an often secularized Pelagian optimism regarding humanity’s ability to better itself. In the nineteenth century in particular, these utopias often reinforced this optimism with the ideas of figures such as Marx and Darwin, further departing from the model of More’s \textit{Utopia} and its Augustinian elements.

\textsuperscript{15} The rhetoric of the Aunts in Atwood’s \textit{The Handmaid’s Tale} similarly emphasizes the distinction between “freedom from” and “freedom to,” with Gilead largely emphasizing the former.
CHAPTER 2

EARLY MODERNIST UTOPIA: 1872-1914

The early modernist utopian paradigm emerged in the late nineteenth century as a result of numerous scientific, social, philosophical, and political developments. The economic, social, and political theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels from earlier in the century, juxtaposed with the abolition of private property in Thomas More’s *Utopia*, lent a socialist perspective to many of these utopias. J. C. Garrett suggests that “socialist theory was the basis of most Utopian thinking” in the second half of the nineteenth century (35), and Edward James argues that by “the later nineteenth century … most utopias offered varieties of socialism. For the followers of nineteenth-century utopianists … men were not inherently wicked; they were naturally good, and that goodness would show through once the distorting effects introduced by capitalism were removed” (220). Meanwhile, utopian authors adapted the biological theories of Charles Darwin to their analyses of society. Garrett argues that Darwin’s *Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) led such authors as Winwood Reade to offer “a forecast of what man would evolve into, given sufficient time” using “eugenics and selective breeding” (28-29).

Garrett accordingly categorizes Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s *The Coming Race* (1871) as the “first work of Utopian fiction to reflect the doctrine of evolution and the marvels of contemporary science” (29), and Samuel Butler takes pains to disavow any influence of *The Coming Race* on *Erewhon* (1872), claiming that his work was mostly finished before advertisements began circulating for Bulwer-Lytton’s and that he “purposely avoided looking into” *The Coming Race*
or its reviews (“Preface to the Second Edition” 3). However, Garrett notes also that *The Coming Race* was “actually more anti-Utopian than Utopian, as it contained a dire warning about the scientific future” (29). Bulwer-Lytton’s work thus prefigures also the skepticism of technocracy of Huxley and Orwell. However, critics such as John J. Pierce have argued that *The Coming Race* is “incredibly pretentious,” while Butler’s work is “more outstanding” (14).

**Samuel Butler, *Erewhon* and *Erewhon Revisited***

Darwin’s evolutionary theories were a key influence on Samuel Butler. Butler began writing *Erewhon* in an article entitled “Darwin among the Machines” in the 1860s (“Preface” 6), in which he argued that “developing the machines as we are, we may [someday] become the inferior race” and that humanity “will be inferior, but will be well-treated because of [its] necessity to the machines; at least [it] is necessary now, though [it] may not be so in the remote future. We are becoming daily more subservient; our complete subjugation is simply a question of time … The solution is war to the death: abolish machines before we are enslaved” (qtd. in Jones 106). However, Butler himself, who farmed on the South Island of New Zealand from 1859 to 1864 (Parrinder, *Utopian* 88), “was not personally anti-machine—he invested the capital he brought back from New Zealand in machine-tool production” (Parrinder, “Entering” 18). Butler expressed disappointment with reviewers who “have in some cases been inclined to treat the chapters on Machines [in *Erewhon*] as an attempt to reduce Mr. Darwin’s theory to an absurdity. Nothing could be further from my intention, and few things would be more distasteful to me than any attempt to laugh at Mr. Darwin; but I must own that I … knew very well that Mr. Darwin’s theory would take no harm” (“Preface to the Second Edition” 3-4). Joseph Jones argues, however, that *Erewhon* “foreshadowed … a fast-growing disillusion with Darwinism
which later erupted into a protracted quarrel with Darwin and his whole school” (161). Patrick Parrinder observes that if “the source of Butler’s arguments is, ultimately, Darwin’s theory of evolution, then the Erehononian abolition of machinery is an attempt to put evolution into reverse” (“Entering” 18).

A satirical attitude toward capitalism and its limitations also takes center stage in Erehon. Butler’s firsthand experiences with the business of publication contribute to a skeptical view of capitalism, as Butler complained in 1901 of copyright issues constraining his revision and republication of Erehon (“Preface” 8); nevertheless, Butler published a “vastly inferior sequel” in his 1901 Erehon Revisited (Parrinder, “Entering” 9). Butler’s narrator, unnamed in Erehon but given the name George Higgs in Erehon Revisited (191), exemplifies this satire of capitalism in his uncritical endorsement of it. Higgs outlines the conundrum of attempting to benefit from discovery under a capitalist system, reflecting the general British stance toward colonization of Australia and New Zealand that “there was plenty to be had from the land, if one had a bit of initial capital and plenty of stamina to force the land to yield” (Jones 5):

I imagine myself to have made a discovery which, if I can be the first to profit by it, will bring me a recompense … But to this end I must possess myself of a considerable sum of money: neither do I know how to get it, except by interesting the public in my story, and inducing the charitable to come forward and assist me. … I do so with great reluctance, for I fear that my story will be doubted unless I tell the whole of it; and yet I dare not do so, lest others with more means than mine should get the start of me. (Erehon 11)

This anxiety of being outmaneuvered in the marketplace drives Higgs to conceal his destination and even the hemisphere in which it lies (11-12), though, like More’s Raphael Hythloday, he wishes his travels to be considered credible (174), particularly as Erehon is ultimately “an elaborate advertisement to potential shareholders” (Neill 69).¹ Higgs evaluates the quality of the

¹ Higgs ultimately identifies Erehon as being in the southern hemisphere (Erehon Revisited 201).
land exclusively in terms of monetary profit (Erewhon 22), and his aim is to monopolize the land (25); when he meets the natives, he laments that “my hopes of making money … were almost annihilated by the fact that the country was full to overflowing, with a people who had probably already developed its more available resources” (42). Higgs’s son John later notes that the lack of gold or pastureland led to disinterest in Erewhon following Higgs’s return (Erewhon Revisited 194-96). Higgs’s remark that “life would be no longer valuable if I were to have seen so great a prize and refused to grasp at the possible profits therefrom” suggests that capitalism is life to him (26), anticipating the comments of Fredric Jameson and other Marxist theorists that “it is easier to imagine the end of the world than … the end of capitalism” (76).2 The natives, for their part, reckon the value of citizens in terms of “horse-power,” or “the number of foot pounds which they have money enough to raise” (Erewhon 54), suggesting an inextricable relationship between labor and wealth, and the magistrate of the unborn describes the prospective of life in terms of capital: “you must live on your capital; there is no investing your powers so that you may get a small annuity of life [forever]: you must eat up your principal bit by bit, and be tortured by seeing it grow continually smaller and smaller” (117-18).

Butler’s satire of capitalism frequently invokes Marxist criticism of capitalist society. Like Marx, Higgs identifies money as underlying the dissolution of the family. However, Higgs, as the means of Butler’s satire, endorses apprenticeship and child labor as a means for enriching the family. Higgs suggests that “earning money … means ‘doing good’ to society,” and argues that “true philanthropy” is to benefit society by succeeding in business, noting that in Erewhon “if a man has made a fortune of over £20,000 a year they exempt him from all taxation” and that

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2 Eugene Nulman points out that this dictum has been attributed to Jameson, Slavoj Žižek, and others, citing Jameson’s uncertainty about the origin of the idea (“Easier”).
the Erewhonians consider money “the symbol of duty” and “the sacrament of having done for mankind that which mankind wanted” (122-23). Higgs’s analysis of the Erewhonian justice system aligns with Marxist materialism and collectivism against individualistic liberalism: “Who shall limit the right of society except society itself? And what consideration for the individual is tolerable unless society be the gainer thereby?” However, Higgs recognizes also the difficulties inherent in revolution:

Wherefore should a man be so richly rewarded for having been son to a millionaire, were it not clearly provable that the common welfare is thus better furthered? We cannot seriously detract from a man’s merit in having been the son of a rich father without imperiling our own tenure of things which we do not want to jeopardise; if this were otherwise we should not let him keep his money for a single hour; we would have it ourselves at once. For property is robbery, but then, we are all robbers or would-be robbers together, and have found it essential to organize our thieving …. (76)

Further, the rejection of an afterlife in Erewhonian religion invokes Marx’s attitude toward religion itself as “the sigh of the oppressed creature … the opium of the people” (95):

[It] would lead people to cheapen this present life, making it appear to be an affair of only secondary importance; that it would thus distract men’s minds from the perfecting of this world’s economy, and was an impatient cutting, so to speak, of the Gordian knot of life’s problems, whereby some people might gain present satisfaction to themselves at the cost of infinite damage to others; that the doctrine tended to encourage the poor in their improvidence, and in a debasing acquiescence in ills which they might well remedy. (Erewhon 108)

Conversely, however, the natives consider the ill and poor to be “the basest criminals” (54), and one Erewhonian author likens “the homage which we see rich men receive from those who are

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3 Higgs argues also that “the growing tendency to limit families by infanticide—an evil which was causing general alarm throughout the country—was almost entirely due to the way in which education had become a fetish from one end of Erewhon to the other” and that when “parents find that their children, instead of being made artificially burdensome, will early begin to contribute to the well-being of the family, they will soon leave off killing them, and will seek to have that plenitude of offspring which they now avoid” (122-23), anticipating issues of reproduction and availability of education to women in Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale. Higgs’s account leaves ambiguous the state of education for women in Erewhon: Higgs suggests that “the young men and women grew up as sensible and goodly as they did, in spite of the attempts almost deliberately made to warp and stunt their growth” in the Erewhonian educational system, but that “the boys only lost their time” in doing so (133).
poorer” to “the veneration which a dog feels for man” (159). Nosnibor’s extreme wealth meanwhile leads Higgs to disbelieve that Nosnibor could be capable of the embezzlement he has committed (60). Thus, both Higgs and his hosts exhibit the attitudes of social Darwinism toward the poor and the rich. This ambiguity leads Erewhon to “resist … social and political explication”; as a result, “Erewhon has not been much favoured within present-day Utopian studies” (Parrinder, “Entering” 9).

The influence of More and Utopia on Butler’s Erewhon is clear from the outset. The eponymous land of Erewhon, a reversal of nowhere, recalls More’s derivation of Utopia’s name from the Greek “no place” (Rabkin 114). Further, Higgs’s depiction of the economics of raising sheep recalls Hythloday’s complaints about its economic effects. Higgs describes European settlers as appropriating vast spaces of land and their flocks as unsustainably “overrunning” that land in short order (12, 15), much as Hythloday describes wealthy landowners closing off huge portions of land as pasture for sheep. Higgs’s description of Erewhon’s natives as “the very best-bred people that I ever fell in with” recalls Hythloday’s admiration of the Utopians (43).

Like More’s Utopia, Butler’s Erewhon is separated geographically rather than temporally from the western world, in contrast to the later utopias and dystopias of Huxley, Orwell, Burgess, and Atwood, which take place years or centuries in the future and are “prognostications of the shape of things to come” (Garrett 30). While More’s Utopia is “an island of communal equality somewhere in the western seas” (8), and Bulwer-Lytton’s utopia is underground (29-30), a series of mountain ranges separates Erewhon from existing European colonies. Garrett suggests that Erewhon is “merely a saucy satire on England” rather than a “genuine Utopia” (33), much in the

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4 Anna Neill further describes the Crown’s opening of “waste” lands in New Zealand to sheep ranching in the 1850s as “a signature act of enclosure in the new colony” (65).
same way that the debates and descriptions in *Utopia* satirize the England of its day. The Erewhonians conversely take Higgs’s description of England as a utopia: Mr. Balmy argues that “the supposed nation spoken of by the Sunchild was an invention designed in order to give us instruction by the light of which we might more easily remodel our institutions” (*Erewhon Revisited* 289-90). Jones argues in particular that in “the law courts and palaces and other interiors of Erewhon … various large segments of Victorian society are turned upside down for ironic scrutiny” (116), and Eric S. Rabkin describes the land as “a reversal of everything stable in Victorian England,” pointing out that “by the case Butler makes for the alternatives, the real-world norms look bad indeed. … Each item in the catalog of Butler’s ironic twists touches the underlying fabric of Victorianism” (114, 116). Anna Neill suggests that “*Erewhon* has none of the webby realism of a great novel” and that “*Erewhon* seems more interested in outlining the hypocrisies of English society than in fleshing out the characters and fortunes of the real or imaginary inhabitants of a remote country in the South Pacific” (63, 64). Joseph Wood Krutch likewise identifies between Butler, More, and even Plato a common “appeal to reason in contradistinction to passion, habit, or mere custom” (219), much as Kathryn Hume argues that reason is a common theme connecting More, Edward Bellamy, Morris, and Huxley (106). The relationship between Butler and Higgs further reflects the complexities of that between Thomas More and Hythloday. Jones describes Higgs as “a good deal like Samuel Butler” though intellectually “dampened down to suit certain of Butler’s satiric purposes” (56). However, Neill argues that Higgs’s “hypocritical entrepreneurial designs [are] a target of Butler’s mockery all along” in *Erewhon* (69). Garrett points in particular to Butler’s conservatism, arguing that never “in his life did Butler play the role of a social reformer; he did not dislike capitalism and always voted Tory. … In Erewhon, that delightful topsy-turvy land, Butler finds much to satirize in
religion, education, medicine, and the law, but he hardly ever suggests, even by implication, how the world may be righted” (33-34). Christopher Hollis likewise argues that Butler was “in politics a strong conservative who believed that it was the duty of those who had independent incomes to protect them and to live off them” (86). Mark Hillegas further suggests that rather than offering “actual possibilities,” satiric utopians such as Butler present “in this other world … inversions, parodies, or grotesque variations of things in our world” (qtd. in Pintér 143), and Pierce describes Erewhon as “a classic satire of British education, the Anglican church, technology, and evolution” (14). Like More’s Utopia and many other early utopias, Erewhon “contains few convincing characters; its emphasis lies almost solely on ideas” (Jones 94), in the style of the genre of anatomy as Northrop Frye describes it.

Higgs’s narration explicitly favors a topical rather than a chronological arrangement, offering an anatomy of Erewhon, to adapt Frye’s terminology. Higgs introduces his description of a trial by relating that it “did not occur till I had been some months in the country, and I am deviating from chronological order in giving it here; but I had perhaps better do so in order that I may exhaust this subject before proceeding to others” (71). Higgs’s anatomical presentation of Erewhon at times even gives away key elements of the narrative plot, such as Higgs’s romance with a native woman he calls Arowhena and his subsequent flight from Erewhon. For instance, in describing the children of Erewhon, Higgs notes, “I can well believe that my own child might find it less of a calamity to lose both Arowhena and myself when he is six years old, than to find

5 By contrast, Higgs’s son, the narrator of Erewhon Revisited, arranges his material so that “chronological order is least outraged” (329). Erewhon Revisited thus takes a more conventionally novelistic form and emphasizes mimetic presentation of the narrative, although John Higgs, the son, occasionally gives away plot details in advance before describing them further later in the narrative (330). Erewhon and its sequel thus exemplify a gradual shift between more anatomical and more novelistic presentations of utopia and dystopia.
us again when he is sixty” (121), relating in advance that he and Arowhena will end the narrative together.

Earlier literary sources such as Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, Shakespeare, Milton, and even the dialogues of Plato similarly influence *Erewhon*. Aside from the common attitudes toward capitalism between Crusoe and Higgs, the latter attempts to Christianize a native named Chowbok/Kahabuka in much the same way that Crusoe attempts to influence Friday. Higgs’s observation that after Chowbok’s departure “I could neither be of further spiritual assistance to him nor he of bodily profit to myself” reflects Crusoe’s exploitation of Friday and the other natives (*Erewhon* 31-32), and Jones notes that “the last few pages of *Erewhon* are an indictment of colonial native policy” (150). The ominous “half-melted tracks of goats—and … a dog following them” exert the same effect on Higgs as the infamous footprint on Crusoe (33). Higgs’s host in Erewhon, a recovered embezzler, is named Mr. Nosnibor (54, 59), a reversal of Crusoe’s first name. Morgan notes that both *Crusoe* and its many imitators are replete with utopian elements (44). Jones points out also that “Butler resembles Swift not a little: the headstrong young explorer, Higgs, is fit companion for Lemuel Gulliver. Intellectually limited and somewhat naïve as both are made out to be, both at the same time are allowed to retain their fundamentally sensible humanity amidst a collection of marvels. Both take things in stride and render their ingenuous reports from a viewpoint not much off center” (156). Neill suggests that although “he suffers no Gulliver-like humiliation at the end of *Erewhon*, Higgs too becomes the object of his author’s satire as the profit-lust of the made man, harnessed to the networking technologies of imperial commerce, so clearly feeds on the primitive, sluggish bodies of the poor and the colonized” (70). Arthur Morgan argues that in both Swift and Butler, it is
unclear “whether the utopian spirit or the spirit of satire for its own sake is dominant” (44). Darko Suvin suggests that *Erewhon* is a “lasting text because it at least approaches a sketch of the country where ulterior motives of Victorian society are explicitly unveiled” (165), though *Erewhon Revisited* “retraced even such partial estrangement … by its final horizon of a saving annexation to England” (166). However, Parrinder argues that in both *Gulliver’s Travels* and *Erewhon*, “it is not always immediately obvious exactly who or what is being satirised” (“Entering” 7). The romantic plot involving Higgs, Arowhena, and their romantic rivals further recalls that of *The Taming of the Shrew* (100), and Higgs invokes Hamlet’s soliloquy in discussing the morality of suicide (109), while his son quotes Milton’s “Il Penseroso” (*Erewhon Revisited* 373). The “birth formulae” of the Erewhonians enact literally the social contract of Plato’s *Republic* and *Crito* (*Erewhon* 110-12), and Morgan identifies *Republic* in particular as occupying “the twilight zone between utopia and philosophy” (43).  

Conversely, *Erewhon* provides models for concepts key to later utopias and dystopias. Parrinder identifies *Erewhon*, along with such contemporary works as *The Coming Race* and H. G. Wells’s *The Time Machine* (1895), as a “dystopian romance, in which the narrative standpoint is external to dystopia and the plot is that of a travelogue or adventure tale,” in which the “protagonist visits a supposedly utopian society … and, in most cases, narrowly escapes to tell

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6 Darko Suvin likewise identifies Swift as a watershed figure in utopian literature: “After *Gulliver’s Travels*, it is impossible to believe in a merely institutional, static utopia which does not face the nature of man. The new Heavens and new Earth demand a new Man” (113).

7 The Erewhonian concept of the existence of the unborn, in turn, anticipates the concepts of *original position* and *veil of ignorance* of twentieth-century philosopher John Rawls: the unborn desiring to be born must “go into the world helpless” and “draw lots for their dispositions before they go, and take them, such as they are, for better or worse … [who their parents] are to be, whether rich or poor, kind or unkind, healthy or diseased, there is no knowing: they have, in fact, to entrust themselves for many years to the care of those for whose good constitution and good sense they have no sort of guarantee” (*Erewhon* 115). In *News from Nowhere*, Hammond argues similarly that “the ‘Society’ of the [nineteenth century] helped … in visiting the sins of the father upon the children” and that “how to take the sting out of heredity … has for long been one of the most constant cares of the thoughtful men amongst us” (95).
the tale,” and in which the “inhabitants are happily unconscious of their own servitude” (“Entering” 6-7, 11). Higgs notes approvingly the social stratification of the Erewhonians: “No one with any sense of self-respect will place himself on an equality … with those who are less lucky than himself in birth, health, money, good looks, capacity, or anything else. Indeed, that dislike and even disgust should be felt by the fortunate for the unfortunate … is not only natural, but desirable for any society, whether of man or brute” (Erewhon 63). This stratification permeates later dystopias, from the genetic castes and indoctrinated class consciousness in Brave New World to the economic disparity between the Inner Party, Outer Party, and proles in Nineteen Eighty-Four, to the Commanders’ wives, Handmaids, Marthas, “econowives,” and “unwomen” of The Handmaid’s Tale. Higgs further muses that humanity is often ill-equipped to consider its position relative to any alternatives: “We next to never know when we are well off: but this cuts two ways,—for if we did, we should perhaps know better when we are ill off also; and I have sometimes thought that there are as many ignorant of the one as of the other” (20). Higgs notes that a judge he observes “could not emancipate himself from, nay, it did not even occur to him to feel, the bondage of the ideas in which he had been born and bred” (77).

Maintaining this ignorance and bondage while convincing subjects that they are better off than in the past are key concerns of the regimes of Huxley, Orwell, and Atwood, and Higgs’s reflection that “though God cannot alter the past, historians can” anticipates the continuous revision of history at the Ministry of Truth in Nineteen Eighty-Four (Erewhon Revisited 287). Higgs’s description of alienation between parents and children, and of parents being blamed for the wrongdoing of children, foreshadows the prospect of children denouncing parents to the State in Orwell and the outright abolition of the family in Huxley (Erewhon 120; Erewhon Revisited 258), and Higgs’s argument that “it is even more necessary to check exuberance of mental
development than to encourage it” anticipates Mustapha Mond’s attitude toward the dangers of truth and science in *Brave New World* (*Erewhon* 134). Critics such as Carol Franko thus identify a thread of “utopian satires and dystopias” extending from Butler to Yevgeny Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell (90). Pierce suggests further that Butler’s satire has influenced Karel Čapek, Italo Calvino, and other more recent authors of science fiction and “satirical fantasy” (14). Jones argues that *Erewhon* and *Erewhon Revisited* are “an early counterthrust … to the unwitting process by which science-technology has been hammered into the tightly clutched implement of the power state. Other satiric prophets were to point this out along the way … until in Thomas Henry Huxley’s grandson Aldous and in George Orwell the culmination of protest appeared” (172). *Brave New World* and its premise of mass-produced, caste-segregated humanity in particular recalls the anxiety of Erewhon’s inhabitants concerning “the monstrous eventuality of the post-human future” (Neill 55). Meanwhile, in *Erewhon Revisited*, Professor Hanky provides “a sample of the most doctrinaire and arrogant kind of professionalism at work” (Jones 95), anticipating such counterparts as Weston and the scientists of the National Institute for Coordinated Experiments in C. S. Lewis’s Cosmic Trilogy. Jones notes that Hanky is ultimately “the opportunist, willing to operate within any promising framework, be it political, religious, commercial, scientific, or what not,” much as the Institute’s ranks in *That Hideous Strength* include scientists, preachers, politicians, and militant law enforcement. Jones suggests that from “another habitué of the British Museum, Karl Marx, Butler could have received hints of a darker Hankyism that was to draw attention from satirists in the next generation when utopia was called into court” (171).

In particular, *Erewhon* codifies a paradigm of therapeutic attitudes toward criminality present in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Anthony Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange*, and even
Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength*. Higgs receives an offer of hospitality from Mr. Nosnibor, a merchant who has “suffered terribly” from kleptomania and “has but lately recovered from embezzling a large sum of money,” suggesting that the society of Erewhon views criminality as an illness, and those evaluating his condition, called straighteners, consider the outcome a “wonderful recovery” (53-57), while Higgs predicts that Nosnibor will likely never embezzle again (66). Higgs learns that “if a man forges a cheque … or robs with violence from the person, or does any other such things as are criminal in our own country, he is either taken to a hospital and most carefully tended at the public expense, or … he lets it be known to all his friends that he is suffering from a severe fit of immorality” that is “held to be the result of either pre-natal or post-natal misfortune” (61-62). The Erewhonians also espouse behaviorism in much the same way that the rulers in Huxley, Orwell, and Burgess do:

> What is there in this whole world, or in the worlds beyond it, which has a will of its own? … A man is the resultant and exponent of all the forces that have been brought to bear upon him, whether before his birth or afterwards. His action at any moment depends solely upon his constitution, and on the intensity and direction of the various agencies to which he is, and has been, subjected … as he is by nature, and as he has been acted on, and is now acted on from without, so will he do, as certainly and regularly as though he were a machine. (151)

Higgs also exhibits relativist ethics, reproving himself for “how wicked I should be in running counter to established usage” among the natives (54), although he subsequently admits, “I cannot

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8 This paradigm of “straightening” anticipates Lewis’s usage of the adjective *bent* among the inhabitants of Malacandra, up to and including the description of the Bent Oyarsa of Earth (*Out of the Silent Planet* 68, 138).

9 Higgs notes, however, that the straightener’s “prescription” for Mr. Nosnibor includes “a fine to the State of double the money embezzled” and that “no part of the fine was to be paid to the poor woman whose money had been embezzled” (67), a regulation casting the State as the only aggrieved party in the embezzlement. This policy contrasts significantly with that, for instance, of the “not badly governed” Polylerites in More’s *Utopia*, among whom “whoever is found guilty of theft must make restitution to the owner, not (as elsewhere) to the prince; they think that the prince has no more right to the stolen goods than the thief” (23). Meanwhile, such institutions as the Misplaced Confidence Court and the Personal Bereavement Court exact fines and hard labor for the State’s benefit from those convicted in them (67, 69-74), and Erewhonian reformers endeavor to make prisoners even more profitable to the State (78-80).
bear having much to do with people who think differently from myself” (55), and he concludes that “justice is relative” after seeing the Erewhonian justice system in action (77). This relativism anticipates that of Alex in A Clockwork Orange, for instance, who casts himself merely as a patron of “the other shop” in his violence and criminality. The Erewhonians make collective wisdom the basis of knowledge: “A man’s business, they hold, is to think as his neighbours do, for Heaven help him if he thinks good what they count bad.” Higgs argues in turn that “it is hard to see how the Erewhonian theory differs from our own, for the word ‘idiot’ only means a person who forms his opinions for himself” (Erewhon 131). This collectivist relativism anticipates the “sanity is statistical” idea against which Winston Smith unsuccessfully rebels in Nineteen Eighty-Four. Further, Higgs notes that “the conscience of a nation awakened by a respectable old gentleman who has an unseen power up his sleeve will pave hell with a vengeance” (165), anticipating the totalitarian potential of a charismatic leader such as Big Brother in Orwell as well as the invocation of “unseen power” in the religious pretext of Gilead’s fundamentalism in The Handmaid’s Tale. In Erewhon Revisited, the Erewhonian regime forbids its subjects to travel abroad and prescribes summary execution for any foreign visitor in much the same way that Oceania forbids its subjects’ contact with any outsiders.

The attitude toward disease in Erewhon likewise foreshadows eugenic concerns in later dystopias. Higgs describes a judge at a sentencing hearing invoking a defendant’s failure to be “born of healthy and well-to-do parents,” dismissing the consideration that the defendant “had no hand in [his] parentage” (74). Parrinder notes that “eugenic anxieties [underlie] the Erewhonian persecution of disability, disease and physical weakness” and that the “eugenic rationale of

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10 The English word idiot comes from the Greek ἵδωτης, meaning “private person” or “individual” (Liddell and Scott).
treating illness as a crime and excluding all [dark-skinned] foreigners is … obvious even though the narrator himself does not comment on it directly” (“Entering” 19). Eugenics likewise underlies the reproductive practices of numerous later dystopias, from the engineering of high-caste individuals and low-caste subjects in Huxley’s World State to the government-controlled reproduction of the Handmaids and their Commanders in *The Handmaid’s Tale*.

Butler’s satire of Christianity and its use as a pretext for abuse of power further anticipates the role of religion in later dystopias such as *The Handmaid’s Tale*. Neill notes that Higgs “develops a scheme for the combined servitude and conversion of the Erewhonians … shipping them across the Tasman in conditions that recall those of the Atlantic Passage” (68), in which “‘saving souls’ and ‘filling pockets’ are one and the same project” (69). Higgs proposes transporting the Erewhonians to the sugar plantations of Queensland or to “any other Christian colony,” arguing that “the supply of Erewhonians would be unlimited, and they could be packed closely and fed at a very reasonable cost” (*Erewhon* 185), and missionaries to Erewhon subsequently disrupt the economy by attempting to corner the market on silver (*Erewhon Revisited* 380). That George Strong, Higgs’s son by another Erewhonian woman named Yram, appeals to England for colonization underscores the satire of imperialism (*Erewhon Revisited* 380-81). Moreover, Higgs’s proposal to evangelize Erewhon from a gunboat foreshadows

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11 Higgs suspects that the Erewhonians are “the lost tribes” of Israel evicted after the Assyrian conquest; however, he dismisses this consideration as “of a sentimental rather than commercial value, and business is business” (*Erewhon* 184).

12 Hammond in Morris’s *News from Nowhere* likewise points out such trends of religious hypocrisy: “When the civilized World-Market coveted a country not yet in its clutches, some transparent pretext was found [such as] the pushing of a religion no longer believed in by its promoters … any stick, in short, which would beat the dog at all” (125).

13 However, Strong’s recognition that Erewhon has “no army worth the name, and if you do not take us over [someone] else soon will” anticipates Goldstein’s objection in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to primitive utopias such as that of William Morris that a deliberately primitive society would be militarily helpless against aggressors (*Erewhon Revisited* 380-81).
Gilead’s use of religious rhetoric and brute force to establish and maintain hegemony in Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (183). The hypocrisy of the Erewhonians toward the Musical Banks and the nation’s idols, as well as that of Higgs himself, likewise prefigures the religious hypocrisy of Gilead, particularly after Higgs unwittingly introduces the Sunchild myth to Erewhon by escaping in a balloon and the professors modify the myth to suit their agenda in *Erewhon Revisited* and attempt to make it a “national faith” (303), attempting to have Higgs burned at the stake when he returns (311-12), much as the Inquisitor arrests and sentences Jesus to be burned at the stake on his return to Inquisition-era Seville in the “Grand Inquisitor” narrative in Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879-80). That the Musical Bank has its own constabulary and prison cells further underscores the conflation of government and religion (308-11). Higgs founds his objections to the professors on their agenda’s probable effect on society as well as on his own beliefs. He argues that those “at the head of science provide us with the one party; those whom we call our churchmen are the other. Both are corrupt, but we can spare neither, for each checks as far as it can the corruptions of the other.” Moreover, he predicts that “if Hankyism triumphs … he and his school will tamper with the one sure and everlasting word of God revealed to us by human experience. He who plays fast and loose with this is as one who would forge God’s signature to a cheque drawn on God’s own bank” (355).

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14 Professor Panky, for instance, argues that “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us” is a corrupted Erewhonian translation and should read “but do not” rather than “as we” (*Erewhon Revisited* 221-22, 275). Dr. Gurgoyle likewise “began by setting aside every saying ascribed, however truly, to [Higgs as the Sunchild], if it made against [Gurgoyle’s] views, and by putting his own glosses on all that he could gloze into an appearance of being in his favour” (264). A head boy at the Deformatory recites the lesson that “no man can serve God well and truly who does not serve Mammon a little also; and no man can serve Mammon effectually unless he serve God largely at the same time,” according to the alleged “esoteric” rather than “exoteric” teaching of the Sunchild (281).
The Sunchild myth of *Erewhon Revisited* also introduces cosmological elements that recur in the works of Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien. John Higgs notes that this myth takes the sun to be “a god … as regards this world and [its] other planets” and that “the sun was the ruler of this planetary system.” The myth also posits a monotheistic God, “the ruler over all the suns throughout the universe—the suns being to Him much as our planets and their denizens are to our own sun … All the suns with their attendant planets are supposed to be equally His children, and He deputes to each sun the supervision and protection of its own system” (*Erewhon Revisited* 224). Thus, in Lewis’s Cosmic Trilogy, the Oyéresu of the planets, except for the Bent Oyarsa of Earth, stand in relation to Maleldil much as the suns stand in relation to the one God in the Sunchild myth. The Valar of Tolkien’s Middle-Earth legendarium likewise exist as subordinate gods to Eru Ilúvatar, again with the exception of the fallen Vala known as Melkor or Morgoth (*Silmarillion* 16-31).

Skepticism toward technology underlies the utopias of both Butler and Morris. While early Renaissance utopian authors such as Bacon believed in “the limitless prospects of science” (Garrett 8), British utopians of the Victorian era such as Butler and William Morris advocated minimal use of technology, following Percy Shelley’s preference for a “primitivistic Paradise” over “the perfected Scientific State” (Garrett 23). This wary attitude toward technology starkly contrasts with that of later utopians such as Wells and of such American contemporaries as Bellamy, whose early twenty-first century Boston utopia in *Looking Backward* (1887) includes such advances as credit cards and music by telephone, and whose “smooth-running Utopia is the

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15 Dr. Gurgoyle’s argument that “the world, so far as we can guess its object, was made rather to be enjoyed than to last” (*Erewhon Revisited* 268) further recurs in the Oyarsa of Malacandra’s condemnation of Weston’s pursuit of collective human immortality in Lewis’s *Out of the Silent Planet*, as well as the disastrous Númenorean attempt to seize the Undying Lands from the Valar and the resulting planetary cataclysm in Tolkien’s “Akallabêth: The Downfall of Númenor” narrative in *Silmarillion*. 


joint product of machinery and science” (Garrett 36). In *Erewhon*, for instance, the people are about as far advanced as Europeans of the twelfth or thirteenth century … yet they must have had at one time the fullest knowledge of our own most recent inventions” (48), and a magistrate imprisons Higgs for possessing a pocket watch, confiscating the watch and placing it in a museum with such other technology as steam engines, pistons, and carriages (45-47). Although the watch is “the only damaging feature in the case,” it is “a very heinous offence, almost as bad … as having typhus fever” (50). Despite Butler’s professed admiration for Darwin, Garrett suggests that Butler “was at pains to rebut the mechanistic assumptions in Darwin’s evolutionism”; however, Garrett argues that “the only quarrel he had with machinery itself was … that it would be a menace if it came to dominate human life” and if humanity developed a “dependence upon machinery” or “devotion to the machine” (34). Jones likewise argues that according to Butler, the “mechanistic view of life … was the one great unpardonable intellectual sin. Let man beware lest he prepare his own descent into bondage” (94). Thus, according to Jones, in *Erewhon Revisited* “what might otherwise seem an attack upon religion per se appears as an attack upon credulity, which for literary effect is given a religious frame” (167). Higgs’s assessment of religion in Britain corroborates Jones’s point: “those who in my country would step into the church’s shoes are as corrupt as the church, and more exacting. They are also more dangerous, for the masses distrust the church, and are on their guard against aggression, whereas they do not suspect the doctrinaires and faddists, who, if they could, would interfere in every concern of our lives” (*Erewhon Revisited* 350). Carolyn Rhodes suggests that in *Erewhon* Butler questions whether humans have “abandoned their human responsibilities when they allow machines to become increasingly dominant in society,” noting that the “myth of the machine gone wrong is doubtless as old as machinery” (85). Rhodes thus surmises that “evolution of the
machine is a threatening progress” (91). In particular, the natives of Erewhon fear that “machines were ultimately destined to supplant the race of man, and to become instinct with a vitality as different from, and superior to, that of animals, as animal to vegetable life” (Erewhon 58). Patricia Warrick describes the fear as one that “machines will eventually develop a consciousness of their own and come to control man, just as men, being offshoots of more primitive forms of life, eventually came to dominate and exploit that life. As early forms of life have developed into increasingly complex organisms and expanded their consciousness in the process, so machines will develop complexity and consciousness” (197). These anxieties figure prominently in countless later works of dystopia and science fiction across media, and although Warrick argues that Butler “probably aimed only at satirizing the idea of evolution and ridiculing reason when it is used to the extreme,” she contends that Butler nonetheless “has been remarkably prophetic in his description of the evolution of the machine” (196), and later utopian authors such as H. G. Wells agreed with Butler that there “appears no limit to the invasion of life by the machine. … We are educated by our circumstances to think no revolution in appliances and economic organization incredible” (A Modern Utopia 71).

16 In Frank Herbert’s Dune (1965), for instance, the Butlerian Jihad proscribes the existence of computers in favor of expanding human mental capacities, at times chemically aided (17-18, 812-13, 845): as Paul Atreides quotes the rule from the Orange Catholic Bible, “Thou shalt not make a machine in the likeness of a man’s mind.” However, the Bene Gesserit Reverend Mother focuses not on the rule of machines per se but on machines as instruments for some humans to oppress others: “Once, men turned their thinking over to machines in the hope that this would set them free. But that only permitted other men with machines to enslave them” (17). Warrick’s description of machines overtaking humanity likewise prefigures the Wachowskis’ The Matrix film trilogy (1999-2003): “as the development of the machine ‘progresses,’ man regresses, and his body is reduced to a piece of flabby muscle, his mind to a mechanism serving the superior mechanism developed by the machines” (Warrick 197).

17 Conversely, Thomas Henry Huxley endorsed the de-evolution of humanity into machine, arguing that if “some great power would agree to make me always think what is true and do what is right, on condition of being turned into a sort of clock and wound up every morning before I got out of bed, I should instantly close with the offer” (qtd. in Krutch 220-21), foreshadowing the dehumanization of the state’s subjects in Yevgeny Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, and especially Anthony Burgess, whose “clockwork orange” imagery reflects that of T. H. Huxley. G. K. Chesterton notes also that Wells in particular is “a sportive but spiritual child of [T. H.] Huxley” (143).
Butler’s concerns regarding technology further influenced later critics of utopia such as G. K. Chesterton, who exhibited skepticism toward Wells’s technocratic utopia and such offshoots as Snowball’s plans for Animal Farm, preferring the attitudes toward labor of Butler and Morris:

There is another strong objection which I, one of the laziest of all the children of Adam, have against the Leisure State. Those who think it could be done argue that a vast machinery using electricity, water-power, petrol, and so on, might reduce the work imposed on each of us to a minimum. It might, but it would also reduce our control to a minimum. We should ourselves become parts of a machine, even if the machine only used those parts once a week. The machine would be our master; for the machine would produce our food, and most of us could have no notion of how it was really being produced… in the social formula to which we are all accustomed, the peasant has control over the means of production. The occasional adjunct to the intermittent machine would have no control whatever over his own leisure, but less over his own life. … The leisured persons might be many things in their long hours of leisure. It is not impossible, by the parallel of plutocracy, that they might be profligates, perverts, drugtakers, dram-drinkers, pessimists, and suicides. But they might all be poets and artists and philosophers. They would not be citizens. (qtd. in Clark 117)

Chesterton’s heavier emphasis on the potential for the “children of Adam” to degenerate into “profligates, perverts, drugtakers, dram-drinkers, pessimists, and suicides” rather than to evolve into “poets and artists and philosophers” suggests an Augustinian rather than a Pelagian view of humanity, following More rather than Marx or Darwin.

William Morris, *News from Nowhere*

Like Butler’s *Erewhon*, William Morris’s *News from Nowhere* (1890) follows More’s neologism *utopia* as “nowhere.” In his 1893 foreword to *Utopia*, Morris argues that advances in socialist thought since More’s time have made *Utopia* far more than “a beautiful book embodying the curious fancies of a great writer and thinker of the period of the Renaissance” and

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18 Again, cf. the Wachowskis’ *Matrix* film trilogy, in which the liquefied remains of the dead nourish the living within the Matrix.
“a charming literary exercise, spiced with the interest given to it by the allusions to the history of the time, and by our knowledge of the career of its author.” Morris proposes that “the change of ideas concerning ‘the best state of a [commonwealth],’ which … is the great event of the end of this century, has thrown a fresh light upon the book; so that now to some it seems not so much a regret for days which might have been, as (in its essence) a prediction of a state of society which will be.” Morris suggests further that *Utopia* “has in our days become a Socialist tract” and “a necessary part of a Socialist’s library,” arguing that socialists “should look upon it as a link between the surviving Communism of the Middle Ages … and the hopeful and practical progressive movement of to-day” (373). According to Morris, More was keenly aware of the transition from medieval to early capitalist society and “all its brutalities,” particularly the “injustice and cruelty of the revolution which destroyed the peasant life of England, and turned it into a grazing farm for the moneyed gentry,” and More “saw deeper into its root-causes than any other man of his own day, and left us little to add to his views on this point except a reasonable hope that those ‘causes’ will yield to a better form of society before long” (374). Morris further argues that on “the subject of war; on capital punishment; the responsibility to the public of kings and other official personages and such-like matters, More speaks words that would not be out of place in the mouth of an eighteenth-century Jacobin” and that *Utopia* represents “a steady expression of the longing for a society of equality of condition” (374-75). Morris himself expressed appreciation for the philosophy of the Jacobins and the French Revolution, even adopting its slogans: “I believe that as we have even now partly achieved LIBERTY, so we shall one day achieve EQUALITY, which, and which only, means FRATERNITY, and so have leisure from poverty and all its griping, sordid cares” (“Lesser” 253).

19 In turn, critics have similarly identified *News from Nowhere* as a “communist tract” (Rabkin 18).
However, Morris recognizes in *Utopia* elements that would later influence the dystopias of the twentieth century. Morris notes that in *Utopia* war is “an ugly necessity, to be carried on … by ugly means,” identifying the cruelty of warfare along with the omnipresent slavery and asceticism that would later permeate Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (“Foreword” 374). Morris points out also that More conceives of “a society in which the individual man can scarcely conceive of his existence apart from the Commonwealth of which he forms a portion” (375), anticipating the collectivism and erasure of individual identity of Zamyatin’s *We*. Morris’s commitment to art and beauty also leads him to reject some particulars of More’s utopia: while the citizens of More’s utopia dress plainly, those of *News from Nowhere* dress in “gaiety and brightness” and like “to see the coverings of our bodies beautiful like our bodies are … just as a deer’s or an otter’s skin has been made beautiful from the first,” arguing that their society can produce both food and fine clothing (164-65).20 The people of Morris’s utopia further reject “moving about from one home to another,” arguing that “one gets so pleasantly used to all the detail of the life about one; it fits so harmoniously and happily into one’s own life, that beginning again, even in a small way, is a kind of pain” (210).

Morris’s 1889 review of Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* further illustrates his views of the potential benefits and drawbacks of socialist utopia. Morris suggests that “ten years ago it would have been very little noticed if at all: whereas now several editions have been sold in America, and it is attracting general attention in England” (“Looking” 353). Morris identifies a danger in

20 Morris, like Butler, posits an increase in standards of beauty in his utopia, compared to the “gaunt figures, lean, flat-breasted, ugly, without a grace of form or face about them” of Guest’s day (*News* 169), and Clara predicts that Guest “will look younger after a little time with us” (161-62). Conversely, Winston Smith reflects on the disparity between “the physical type set up by the Party as an ideal—tall muscular youths and deep-bosomed maidens, blond-haired, vital, sunburnt, carefree” and his firsthand observation that “the majority of people in Airstrip One were small, dark, and ill-favored … little dumpy men, growing stout very early in life, with short legs, swift scuttling movements, and fat inscrutable faces with very small eyes” (Orwell 60).
utopian speculation in that some readers “will accept it with all its necessary errors and fallacies … as conclusive statements of facts and rules of action,” while others may reject specific utopian visions; therefore, Morris concludes, the “only safe way of reading a Utopia is to consider it as the expression of the temperament of its author” (354). In particular, Morris criticizes Bellamy’s vision of “State Communism, worked by the very extreme of national centralization … though he tells us that every man is free to choose his occupation and that work is no burden to anyone, the impression which he produces is that of a huge standing army, tightly drilled, compelled by some mysterious fate to unceasing anxiety for the production of wares” (356). Like Butler, Morris exhibits skepticism toward technology: “a machine-life is the best which Mr Bellamy can imagine for us on all sides; it is not to be wondered at then that his only idea of making labour tolerable is to decrease the amount of it by means of fresh and ever fresh developments of machinery.” By contrast, Morris’s own ideal is not “the reduction of labour to a minimum, but rather to the reduction of pain in labour to a minimum.” According to Morris, Bellamy thus “worries himself unnecessarily in seeking (with obvious failure) some incentive to labour to replace the fear of starvation, which is at present our only one, whereas … the true incentive to useful and happy labour is and must be pleasure in the work itself” (357). Morris thus dismisses Bellamy’s utopia as a “Cockney paradise” (qtd. in Rabkin 139). Morris points out that “some Socialists … do not think that the problem of the organization of life and necessary labour can be dealt with by a huge national centralization” (358), anticipating later dystopian anxieties over totalitarianism. These anxieties further underlie Morris’s rejection in News from Nowhere of the communal living of Utopia and French theorist Charles Fourier’s utopian experiments, and the

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21 Chris Ferns argues that in contrast to the works of More, Fourier’s writings “were intended … not as fictions, but as the basis for a practical [program] of action” (25). Among later literary figures, Wells employs a caste system in which Ferns identifies elements of Fourier (90). Dostoyevsky, in contrast, rejects Fourier’s utopianism on the
citizens of Morris’s utopia “discourage centralization all we can” (98-99, 101). Morris instead advocated voluntary relationships, arguing in the second edition of *The Manifesto of the Socialist League* that in “a Socialist system contracts between individuals would be voluntary and unenforced by the community … children would be treated from their birth as members of the community entitled to share in all its advantages; so that economical compulsion could no more be brought to bear on the contract than legal compulsion could be” (qtd. in Wilmer 412). Morris argued that even under a capitalist system, “we may adorn life with the pleasure of cheerfully *buying* goods at their due price; with the pleasure of *selling* goods that we could be proud of both for fair price and fair workmanship: with the pleasure of working soundly and without haste at *making* goods that we could be proud of … much the greatest pleasure of the three is that last” (“Lesser” 250). Morris considered such art essential to life for all: “I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few, or freedom for a few” (253).

Morris’s fiction likewise anticipates dystopian concerns concerning politics, economics, and industrialization. In Morris’s “A Dream of John Ball” (1886-87), Ball initially suggests that as a result of industrialized production, goods would be plentiful for rich and poor alike, leading to increased leisure, education, and political activity among the working classes until the “rich and tyrannous” disappear (33-34), much as Goldstein’s book presents economic plenty and education for the masses as dangers to the oligarchy in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. However, Ball cautions the narrator that “surely they shall make more wares than they can use in one

Augustinian grounds that the “answers to man’s problems, when and if they come, will not come … from applying the organizational schemes” of Fourier or similar utopian theorists but rather “from applying the self-abjuration, compassion, and forgiveness taught by Jesus Christ,” following More’s Augustinianism. However, Dostoevsky envisioned a “utopian ideal” of “a world restored to peace, united … and watched over by the Greek Orthodox Church” (Richter 185), in contrast to later skepticism of theocracy of such authors as C. S. Lewis and Margaret Atwood.
countryside, or one good town … the goods shall abide there in the storehouses of the rich place
till they perish … then shall men be but little holpen by making all their wares so easily and with
so little labour” (32), a concern that recurs in both Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four
and is resolved by indoctrinated commercialism in the former and perpetual warfare in the latter.
This progress, Ball predicts, “shall not bring heaven down to the earth, as erst I deemed it would,
but rather … it shall bring hell up on to the earth” (35). Ball further warns against the danger of
religion as a means of tyranny, even if it provides otherwise unavailable social mobility:

Nought were it to me if the Abbot of St Alban’s with his golden mitre sitting guarded by
his knights and sergeants, or the Prior of Merton with his hawks and hounds, had once
been poor men, if they were now tyrants of poor men; nor would it better the matter if
there were ten times as many Houses of Religion in the land as now are, and each with a
churl’s son for abbot or prior over it. (35)

Even so, the narrator optimistically reassures Ball that “the Fellowship of Men shall endure,
however many tribulations it may have to wear through,” and that “men shall have the fruits of
the earth and the fruits of their toil thereon, without money and without price” (36).

Morris’s utopia, News from Nowhere (1890-91), like Bellamy’s, departs from the
precedent of More and Butler in invoking a utopia separated chronologically rather than
geographically from its contemporary world, setting its own precedent for such later authors as
Zamyatin, Huxley, Orwell, Burgess, and Atwood. However, News from Nowhere provides
Morris’s “imaginative answer to Bellamy” to supplement Morris’s earlier literary criticism
(Garrett 37). Suvin likewise casts News from Nowhere as “a direct reply to Looking Backward”
(178), arguing that both Bellamy and Morris “use the anticipation device so effectively because
they are about incipient collective human relationships in the 1880s as they (differently) saw
them” (76); thus, “the dreams or visions of Bellamy and Morris can also be treated as
complementary: there is, finally, no need to make an exclusive choice between them” (191). In
particular, Suvin suggests that Morris “especially objected to Bellamy’s stress on both technological and social machinery that leaves the impression ‘of a standing army, tightly drilled’ [and] to the corresponding ‘State Communism’ as opposed to direct participatory democracy” (179). Suvin argues also that both News from Nowhere and “A Dream of John Ball” take the form of a “dream … to be understood in the tradition of the medieval genre of the same name, in which the convention, as in Langland or Chaucer, is that the author relates the dream as a non-naturalistic analogy—often using the fable or other allegorical means—to public problems of great personal import” (184). Morris’s narrator, William Guest, falls asleep in Victorian London and awakens to find a “not very old” bridge that had been constructed in 2003 and a pocketful of tarnished silver coins (News 45-49, 55).22 This utopia, like Butler’s Erewhon, excises advanced technology, even in London: “The soap-works with their smoke-vomiting chimneys were gone; the engineer’s works gone; the lead-works gone; and no sound of riveting and hammering came down the west wind from Thorneycroft’s” (48). While mechanical weaving and machine printing still exist, work by hand is considered “finer,” and a weaver suggests that “machine printing is beginning to die out, along with the waning of the plague of book-making” (58). Hammond, Guest’s host and dialogue partner at the British Museum, argues that in the past “devices for cheapening labour simply resulted in increasing the burden of labour” (125). This rejection of technology follows Morris’s belief that “in a world dominated by machines the creative instincts would die” (Garrett 44). Guest presents this utopia as one without

22 Clive Wilmer notes that Morris revised the timeline of his utopia between the serialized and monograph publications of News from Nowhere: in the 1890 newspaper serialization in the Commonweal, the paper of the Socialist League, the bridge had been built in 1971 (xxxv, 410). Wilmer points out also that the date of the revolution is changed in the monograph publication from 1910 to 1952, suggesting that these revisions are “evidence … of Morris’s growing pessimism” (xxxvi; Morris, News 78). This pessimism anticipates pessimism that would permeate later dystopias.
private property and its corollary issues (Morris, *News* 90), in which all may take what they want freely, as he unsuccessfully attempts to pay for tobacco and a pipe as well as a boat ride from a boatman who also engages in metalworking and harvesting work, and workers exchange jobs casually (49-52, 72-74), while poverty is incomprehensible except among historians who blame it and its antecedent “systematized robbery” on other social ills (63, 97). Guest further describes history as an arc from “the older imperfect communal period, through the time of the confused struggle and tyranny of the rights of property, into the present rest and happiness of complete Communism” (206-07; Suvin 187). The attitude of the citizens of this utopia toward labor reflects that in Morris’s review of *Looking Backward*: Hammond argues that the “reward of labour is life … the reward of creation” and that “all work is now pleasurable; either because of the hope of gain in honour and wealth … or else because it has grown into a pleasurable habit … and lastly (and most of our work is of this kind) because there is conscious sensuous pleasure in the work itself” and that “it is this change” from previous conditions of labor “which makes all the others possible” (122-23). Hammond, like Hythloday, views “a never-ending series [of] sham or artificial necessaries,” as later exemplified in Huxley, as a capitalist impediment (134; cf. Suvin 181-82), and he explains that “the so-called science of the nineteenth century … was in the main an appendage to the commercial system” and “not seldom an appendage to the police of that system” (158). Guest particularly criticizes crony capitalism in the form of railway corporations that “would not allow the people of the country to use either the natural or artificial waterways … so that they might force people to send their goods by their private road, and so tax

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23 The labor market in *News from Nowhere* thus contrasts starkly with, for instance, that of the all-Alpha experiment on Cyprus which Mustapha Mond describes to John Savage in *Brave New World* (200-01).

24 Morris’s position thus anticipates some of Tolkien’s later arguments on sub-creation.
them as heavily as they could” (215). The citizens invoke collectivist views of public policy and happiness, viewing injustice toward one as injustice toward all, as their attitude toward inhumane prisons demonstrates: “how could [people] look happy if they knew that their neighbours were shut up in prison, while they bore such things quietly? And if there were people in prison, you couldn’t hide it from folk, like you may an occasional man-slaying; because that isn’t done of set purpose, with a lot of people backing up the slayer in cold blood, as this prison business is” (80).  

Morris’s utopia also espouses social pluralism, as Guest learns that “there is no code of public opinion … no unvarying conventional set of rules by which people are judged; no bed of Procrustes to stretch or cramp their minds and lives; no hypocritical excommunication which people are forced to pronounce, either by unconsidered habit, or by the unexpressed threat of the lesser interdict if they are lax in their hypocrisy” (93). Hammond suggests that “the whole people is our parliament” and “we have no longer anything which you … would call a government” (107), suggesting collectivist anarchy,  

and he later describes to Guest the participatory democracy of the commune/ward/parish Mote (119). This limited government, anticipating the democratic tendencies of Lewis and the quasi-anarchist leanings of Tolkien, reflects Morris’s belief that no man “is good enough to be another man’s master” (qtd. in Hollis 108). Hammond argues that “slough awaits State Socialism in the end, if it gets to the end” and that “government factories for the production of necessary wares, and markets for their sale” were “partial,  

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25 This counterintuitive attitude toward homicide anticipates that of the World State in *Brave New World*, in which the Director considers Bernard Marx’s nonconformity more heinous than murder (137), as well as that behind the omnipresent democide in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (61).

26 Guest notes earlier that “four … strong but divergent Anarchist opinions” were represented at the Socialist League meeting he had attended the evening before his time travel (*News* 43). However, Morris argues in “How I Became a Socialist” (1894) that “from some of my Anarchist friends … I learned, quite against their intention, that Anarchism was impossible” (380).
inefficient [and] terribly jobbed,” until “a vast part of the population had for the time being to be fed on undisguised ‘charity’ as it was called” (138).

Morris satirizes elements of Victorian Britain in much the same way that More and Butler satirize the England of their respective days. The citizens of Morris’s utopia jest at “the radical cobblers in the silly old novels, who … were prepared to trample down all good manners in the pursuit of utilitarian knowledge,” as well as “those idiotic old books about political economy” and “the stupidity of that day, which despised everybody who could use his hands” (56, 58). Guest further inveighs against privatization encroaching on common rights in logging (56), much as Hythloday does against pastureland enclosures in *Utopia.* Like Hythloday, Guest considers criminality an effect of social and commercial structures, condemning harsh state imprisonment as hypocritical: “the Mediaeval folk acted after their conscience … whereas the nineteenth-century ones were hypocrites and pretended to be humane, and yet went on tormenting those whom they dared to treat so by shutting them up in prison, for no reason at all, except that they were what they themselves, the prison-masters, had forced them to be” (79). Hammond further condemns the “sloth, the hopelessness, and … the cowardice” of the nineteenth century (155).

While Butler satirizes English education by means of Erewhon’s Colleges of Unreason, Morris’s future England abandons formal education altogether in favor of apprenticeships and self-teaching (66-67), encouraging children to eschew “early bookishness” in favor of “genuinely amusing work, like house-building and street-paving” (68). Hammond in particular directly

27 Morris further pays homage to the Utopians’ use of gold in More, as the satirically nicknamed Mr. Boffin is the subject of his friends’ jests for wearing “as much gold … as a baron of the Middle Ages.” However, his friends consider him “a capital fellow” and consider his fashion choices his business (*News* 60), and Guest and company encounter similar tastes in clothing among road workers (82).
criticizes the nineteenth-century British educational system (97-98, 183-84), as well as conservative British media such as the *Daily Telegraph* (149).

Morris further satirizes British politics in relegating the Houses of Parliament to “a storage place for manure” (69), and Hammond adds that “dung is not the worst kind of corruption; fertility may come of that, whereas mere dearth came from the other kind, of which those walls once held the great supporters” (107). Guest also directly attacks the Bloody Sunday government violence against protestors at Trafalgar Square in 1887 in describing it to his hosts (78; Wilmer xx-xxi, 411).

Despite this satire, Morris’s utopia retains an optimistic worldview as compared to later works. For instance, Guest learns that children “often make up parties, and come to play in the woods for weeks together in summer-time, living in tents … We rather encourage them to it; they learn to do things for themselves” (*News* 65), a favorable impression of children left to their own devices in contrast to later works focusing on youth such as *A Clockwork Orange*. Although Guest’s guides admit that “perversity and self-will are commoner than some of our moralists think,” these vices present themselves primarily in such irrational issues as romantic conflict (*News* 72, 188-89). According to Hammond, key to the human condition is “a longing for freedom and equality” and an “instinct for freedom” (134-35); Henry Morsom, whomGuest

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28 Hammond describes Eton, for instance, as a place where “instead of teaching poor men’s sons to know something, they taught rich men’s sons to know nothing … it was a place for the ‘aristocracy’ … to get rid of the company of their male children for a great part of the year” (*News* 183-84). However, Hammond endorses Oxford, Cambridge, and “real learning, knowledge cultivated for its own sake—the Art of Knowledge,” in contrast to Butler’s attitude toward the Colleges of Unreason and their professors. Hammond suggests that the universities “became definitely commercial” in the nineteenth century but have since “reverted to some of [their] best traditions” (103), while Guest describes Oxford as having been “don-beridden” in his time (206). Guest notes also that women are at least as practically knowledgeable as men: “the women … could name a flower, and knew its qualities; could tell you the habitat of such and such birds and fish, and the like” (193), and Ellen’s skill at navigating a river exceeds Guest’s (217).

29 According to Hammond, during the revolution the *Telegraph* accused “the rebels” of acting “for the benefit of a few greedy paid agitators” (*News* 149), an allegation frequently leveled at present-day protesters (Nichols, “Protestors”; “Articles”), including in the *Telegraph* (Crilly, “Donald Trump”), which maintains a reputation for conservatism and has been nicknamed the “Torygraph” (Curtis, “Paper Tiger”).
meets on a boat up the Thames, further adds that “aspiration after complete equality” is “the bond of all happy human society” (200). This optimism represents the foundation of anarchist utopia, as Hammond relates that “a man no more needs an elaborate system of government, with its army, navy, and police, to force him to give way to the will of the majority of his equals” (108), and individual citizens are free to criticize society and have their criticism evaluated rationally. However, while Bellamy envisioned socialist technocracy evolving organically from capitalist aggregation and conglomeration, Morris viewed revolution as a necessary antecedent to utopia, and Hammond describes the revolution to Guest in vivid detail as “war from beginning to end: bitter war, till hope and pleasure put an end to it” (133-58).

Like More and Butler, Morris advocates for a sociological and therapeutic understanding of crime. The criminal classes in Morris’s utopia have disappeared because “there is no rich class to breed enemies against the state by means of the injustice of the state” and violent crime arises from “the laws of private property, which forbade the satisfaction of their natural desires to all but a privileged few.” Morris also blames “family tyranny” as a corollary of private property for social ills (112-13), anticipating the primacy of government over family in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the abolition of the family in *Brave New World.*

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30 Guest’s conversation with Hammond further suggests that an end to capitalism would also lead to an end of nationalism and military conflict, as the working class would need at least minimal sustenance under the invaders as under their current ruling class. Thus, prior to the utopian revolution in Morris, “the government really existed for the destruction of wealth” in much the same way as in Huxley and Orwell (*News* 109-10). However, the inhabitants of the zones between Oceania and its rival states in Orwell find themselves in a similar position as the pre-revolution working classes in Morris, performing the same tasks for different masters as the war continues indefinitely. Hammond argues that “the whole system of rival and contending nations which played so great a part in the ‘government’ of the world of civilization has disappeared along with the inequality betwixt man and man in society” and that geopolitics no longer “coerce[s] certain families or tribes, often heterogeneous and jarring with one another, into certain artificial and mechanical groups, and call them nations, and stimulate their patriotism—i.e., their foolish and envious prejudices” (117).
Like *Erewhon*, *News from Nowhere* anticipates elements of later dystopias. For instance, Morris viewed counter-revolution as a real possibility, much as Zamyatin dismissed the idea of a last revolution as akin to that of a last integer. Hammond rhetorically asks Guest, “Revolution having brought its foredoomed change about, how can you prevent the counter-revolution from setting in except by making people happy?” (*News* 133), and Hammond describes the counterrevolution in detail (154-55). Hammond further describes as actually having occurred what Goldstein describes theoretically, that the working classes would realize the superfluous nature of the ruling classes and attempt to do away with them (*News* 135, 152). An old man finds “a spirit of adventure … and signs of a capacity to extract good out of evil” in the “books of the past days” with “splendid works of imagination and intellect” that “our literature quite lacks now” (174, 182), much as Helmholtz Watson bewails the inability to produce good literature in the World State of *Brave New World*.

However, later dystopian authors frequently inverted elements of Morris’s utopia. Hammond describes the revolution as having involved both “fighting with weapons” and “strikes and lock-outs and starvation” as well as looting (*News* 133, 141), anticipating the violence in Huxley and Orwell. While Hammond argues that “the object of Revolution” is “to make people happy” and that a society cannot “expect peace and stability from unhappiness” (123), O’Brien in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* argues that the object of revolution is to establish dictatorship and to ensure unhappiness. The invariably poor quality of the Victory Gin, Victory Cigarettes, Victory Mansions, and the like in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* likewise exemplifies the worst of the capitalist world market as Hammond describes it: “the wares they sold … were transparent makeshifts for the things asked for, which nobody would have put up with if they could have got anything else” (*News* 126). Hammond notes also that “the measures passed for the relief of the workers … had
to be supplemented by unwritten enactments without legality to back them” and that “non-legal leaders” such as the Committee of Public Safety proliferated (147, 152), anticipating the Party’s ability in Nineteen Eighty-Four to punish or kill its subjects without any rule of law to constrain it.

Morris’s utopia further anticipates much of Lewis’s utopian and other works. Morris approached the same issues of labor and politics in both his fiction and nonfiction, presenting many of the same arguments in such lectures as “Useful Work versus Useless Toil” (1884) and “The Hopes of Civilization” (1885) that he would later work into News from Nowhere. Lewis adopted this strategy of presenting the same arguments in both polemic and fictional works, fictionalizing many elements from The Abolition of Man in his quasi-dystopian That Hideous Strength (Hideous 7; “Reply” 98). Although Hammond argues that “assured belief in heaven and hell as two countries in which to live, has gone,” he suggests also that “the spirit of the Middle Ages to whom heaven and the life of the next world was such a reality, that it became to them a part of the life upon the earth” (News 158-59). Hammond also contrasts abstract and concrete concepts of humanity as a difficulty in religion of the nineteenth century:

In times past, indeed, men were told to love their kind, to believe in the religion of humanity and so forth. But … just in the degree that a man had elevation of mind and refinement enough to be able to value this idea, was he repelled by the obvious aspect of the individuals composing the mass which he was to worship; and he could only evade that repulsion by making a conventional abstraction of mankind that had little actual or historical relation to the race. (159)

Similarly, in The Screwtape Letters, Screwtape instructs Wormwood to keep these abstractions at the forefront of the “patient’s” mind:

Make his mind flit to and fro between an expression like “the body of Christ” and the actual faces in the next pew … Provided that any of those neighbours sing out of tune, or
have boots that squeak, or double chins, or odd clothes, the patient will quite easily believe that their religion must therefore be somehow ridiculous. (6)\textsuperscript{31}

Clara’s remark that she feels “as if we were longing for something that we cannot have” likewise anticipates Lewis’s analysis of longing (News 162), and Hammond’s prediction that Guest will serve Clara and Dick as “a good convenient friend to turn to, so that they may relieve the ecstasies of love with the solid commonplace of friendship” (163) prefigures Lewis’s contrast between friendship and erotic love in The Four Loves:

Lovers are normally face to face, absorbed in each other; Friends, side by side, absorbed in some common interest … In each of my friends there is something that only some other friend can fully bring out … Now that Charles is dead, I shall never again see Ronald’s reaction to a specifically Caroline joke. Far from having more of Ronald, having him “to myself” now that Charles is away, I have less of Ronald. Hence true Friendship is the least jealous of loves. Two friends delight to be joined by a third. (61)\textsuperscript{32}

Suvin notes that Morris’s “utopian pastoral or Earthly Paradise” of News from Nowhere in particular “can be felt as the endangered alternative from Wells’s Eloi to C. S. Lewis’s Venus” in Perelandra (193).

Critics of Morris have argued against the practicality of the utopia of News from Nowhere, and later utopias and dystopias reflect the perceived impracticability of Morris’s utopia. Garrett, for example, suggests that “in rejecting industrialism, Morris threw away the means by which the Marxist Utopia could be maintained. Most of the absurdities of Morris’s

\textsuperscript{31} Screwtape further exhorts Wormwood to instill in the patient a similar disparity of thought regarding his mother: “since his ideas about her soul will be very crude and often erroneous, he will, in some degree, be praying for an imaginary person, and it will be your task to make that imaginary person daily less and less like the real mother—the sharp-tongued old lady at the breakfast table. In time, you may get the cleavage so wide that no thought or feeling from his prayers for the imagined mother will ever flow over into his treatment of the real one” (12-13).

\textsuperscript{32} “Charles”/“Caroline” and “Ronald” here presumably refer to Charles Williams, a fellow medievalist and Inklings who wrote on Dante and the Arthurian legends, and J. R. R. (John Ronald Reuel) Tolkien, respectively. Both Lewis and Tolkien attended Williams’s funeral in 1945 (Lindop 424-25), before Lewis’s publication of The Four Loves, while Tolkien, dying in 1973, outlived Lewis, who died in 1963. Lewis’s brother Warren wrote that “the Inklings [could] never be the same again” after Williams’s death (qtd. in Lindop 422).
book are traceable to the impossibility of a socialist paradise without machinery. How, for example, could the vast Victorian population of England survive without industrialism? Morris will not face this question squarely” (39). However, Morris also provides an example of utopia eschewing the escapist tendencies more modern critics have imputed to utopia and to speculative fiction in general. Suvin points out that “though Bellamy came within an ace of returning his narrator to the nineteenth century to work in his own epoch for his new vision, and furthermore made it clear that this would have been the ethically proper course to follow, it was left for the libertarian communist Morris … to actually effect this large step” (190), as Guest “finds in the new, future world enough tragic optimism to return fortified for his struggle inside and against the old, past world” (194). Pierce argues that while in Morris “the anarchist basis of utopian society is refreshing, against the bureaucratic states idealized in most utopias,” and Morris’s value system is “humane,” News from Nowhere fails to answer “how a population scarcely less than that of industrial England feeds itself and finds so much leisure in the absence of high technology” (19).

H. G. Wells, A Modern Utopia

Wells’s A Modern Utopia (1905) represents an intermediate utopia between the earlier utopia of Morris and the subsequent dystopias of Huxley and Orwell. Issues of literary form predominate in Wells, much as in both earlier and later utopias and dystopias. Wells identifies A Modern Utopia in his 1925 preface as “an experiment in form,” having rejected first the prospect of casting his work as polemic nonfiction and subsequently also the “discussion novel,” which entailed “unnecessary characters and the inevitable complication of intrigue among them” (5-6). Like many of his predecessors, Wells puts forward an intermediary between author and audience
in the form of the “Owner of the Voice” (7), analogous to Hythloday, Higgs, and Guest in their respective utopian satires. The Voice begins with direct argumentation on the necessary differences between the “Utopia of a modern dreamer” and its antecedent “Nowheres and Utopias men planned before Darwin quickened the thought of the world.” He argues that “the Modern Utopia must be not static but kinetic, must shape not as a permanent state but as a hopeful stage leading to a long ascent of stages” (11). This argument anticipates the later position of Zamyatin that a static utopia is impracticable.

Wells’s *Modern Utopia* both builds upon and criticizes earlier utopian literature. The Voice suggests that traditional utopias have largely eschewed machinery, identifying Morris in particular as “loyally following” Plato’s lead in this respect. However, the Voice argues that “the social fabric rests no longer upon human labour” and endorses “the escape of man from irksome labours through the use of machinery” (72), suggesting that the “essence of toil is that it is imperative … that it excludes freedom, and not that it involves fatigue” and positing that modern advances can eliminate toil and even class distinctions based on its necessity, thus potentially enacting a classless egalitarian society:

[Now] that the new conditions physical science is bringing about, not only dispense with man as a source of energy but supply the hope that all routine work may be made automatic, it is becoming conceivable that presently there may be no need for anyone to toil habitually at all; that a labouring class—that is to say a class of workers without personal initiative—will become unnecessary to the world of men … abolishing the need of labour, abolishing the last base reason for anyone’s servitude or inferiority. (73)

Garrett notes that in *A Modern Utopia* as elsewhere, Wells is “preoccupied with physical comfort” and “enchanted by mechanical devices and technological processes” (54). The Voice further rejects Morris’s reversal of human nature as implausible:

Were we free to have our untrammeled desire, I suppose we should follow Morris to his Nowhere, we should change the nature of man and the nature of things together; we
should make the whole race wise, tolerant, noble, perfect—wave our hands to a splendid 
anarchy, every man doing as it pleases him, and none pleased to do evil, in a world as 
good in its essential nature, as ripe and sunny, as the world before the Fall. But that 
golden age, that perfect world, comes out into the possibilities of space and time. In space 
and time the pervading Will to Live sustains for evermore a perpetuity of aggressions. … 
We are to restrict ourselves first to the limitations of human possibility as we know them 
in the men and women of this world today, and then to all the inhumanity, all the 
insubordination of nature. (12)

The Voice argues that only “the Olympian unworldliness of an irresponsible rich man of the 
shareholding type, a Ruskin or a Morris playing at life,” could imagine such a drastic reversal of 
human nature as Morris posits in News from Nowhere (72). This criticism of Morris underlies 
Wells’s other speculative fiction as well. According to Roger Luckhurst, the protagonist Time 
Traveler of Wells’s The Time Machine (1895) “reads the society of the Eloi as a Morrisian 
pastoral idyll … when in fact they have biologically degenerated in the absence of the need to 
labor”; thus, the Time Traveler is “torn between the benign but decadent Eloi and the malignant 
but energetic Morlocks” (322). Suvin likewise notes that the Time Traveler initially casts the 
Eloi society as “a parodied Morrisite model” (212), and Pierce argues that the Eloi represent “the 
end-product of a human civilization that has exhausted all challenges; they live in what seems to 
be a new Garden of Eden, but it cares for them; they neither can nor will care for it” (86-87). 
Thus, although Wells here acts as “a successor to Morris,” The Time Machine is “based not on a 
fantastic reversal of the perspective of historical determinism but on an orthodox historical 
extrapolation of the role of technology in society” (Rabkin 141). Wells shares this criticism of 
Morris and other earlier utopians with such critics as G. K. Chesterton, who argued that “the 
weakness of all Utopias is this, that they take the greatest difficulty of man and assume it to be 
overcome, and then give an elaborate account of the overcoming of the smaller ones” (qtd. in 
Clark 207n32). Thus, although the Voice briefly alludes to the fall of humanity as More does,
Wells’s narrator emphasizes Darwinian conflict and the potential hostility of nature as restraints upon the feasibility of utopia: “The old Utopias … ignored that reproductive competition among individualities which is the substance of life … A modern Utopia, unlike its predecessors, dare not pretend to change [that] condition” (95). These concerns, in turn, underlie Weston’s philosophy of the Life Force in C. S. Lewis’s later Cosmic Trilogy, in which Lewis acknowledges a debt to Wells’s science fiction and other writings (Lewis, Silent 7). However, the Voice allows for “a free hand with all the apparatus of existence that man has, so to speak, made for himself,” including “religious organization, with creeds and customs,” and “the hypothesis of the complete emancipation of a community of men from tradition, from habits … and that subtler servitude possessions entail” (13). Wells’s appeal to the “subtler servitude possessions entail” recalls the socialism of Morris and the satire of capitalism in Butler, and the Voice argues that capitalism often encroaches upon individual liberties, “as when the social system, working through the base necessities of base parents and bad laws, sends a child of thirteen into a factory” (30). Meanwhile, his categorization of “religious organization, with creeds and customs” as a human-made apparatus, corroborating Butler’s satire of the Musical Banks in Erewhon and Wells’s rejection of “traditional strict Christianity” and “a cruel God … who seemed to delight in torturing His creations” (Pierce 90), poses a dilemma that splits subsequent utopias and dystopias into two lines. Later secular authors such as Orwell agreed with Wells’s premise; accordingly, in their dystopias, religion often functions as an apparatus of state control or a relic of the past. By contrast, authors who rejected materialism, such as Chesterton, Lewis, and Tolkien, wrote and criticized utopias and dystopias accordingly. Chesterton, for instance, argues that Morris in News from Nowhere “gives a beautiful picture of a land ruled by Love, and rightly grounds the give-and-take camaraderie of this ideal state upon an
assumed improvement in human nature. But he does not tell us how this improvement is to be
effected, and Christ did” (qtd. in Clark 207n32). Wells satirically appeals to a Spirit of
Creation, an appeal he describes as “a daring image, a medieval liberty” (18), anticipating
Weston’s invocation of a sentient Life Force in Lewis’s *Perelandra*.

Wells’s Voice further acknowledges the tension between the anatomy, or Menippean
satire, and the more recent ascent of the novel as a dominant form of prose fiction. The Voice
argues that there “must always be a certain effect of hardness and thinness about Utopian
speculations. … That which is the blood and warmth and reality of life is largely absent; there
are no individualities, but only generalized people … healthy, happy, beautifully dressed, but
without any personal distinction whatever” (13-14). However, in relating the Modern Utopia the
Voice imagines himself “free of the trammels of convincing storytelling” whenever
advantageous (18). When the romantic woes of a botanist companion threaten to intrude, the
Voice asks scornfully, “Have I come to Utopia to hear this sort of thing?” and argues that it “is
necessary to override … this intrusive, petty love story. Does he realize this is indeed Utopia?
Turn your mind, I insist, to this Utopia of mine and leave these earthly troubles to their proper
planet” (24-25).

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33 Chesterton believed that Wells “erred through an ultimate or religious error” and thus titled his study of Wells,
Shaw, and Kipling *Heretics* (*Autobiography* 179), suggesting that Wells “thought that the object of opening the
mind is simply opening the mind,” while Chesterton himself was “incurably convinced that the object of opening the
mind, as of opening the mouth, is to shut it again on something solid” (228-29).

34 Lewis similarly criticizes a “sub-species” of science fiction in which “the author leaps forward into an imagined
future when planetary, sidereal, or even galactic travel has become common” and then “proceeds to develop an
ordinary love-story, spy-story, wreck-story, or crime-story. This seems to me tasteless. Whatever in a work of art is
not used, is doing harm. The faintly imagined, and sometimes strictly unimaginable, scene and properties, only blur
the real theme and distract us from any interest it might have had” (“On Science” 82-83). Lewis suggests that these
works “leap a thousand years to find plots and passions which they could have found at home” (84). Suvin likewise
argues that “if SF [science fiction] is organized around an irreversible and significant change in its world and agents,
then a simple addition of adventures, where plus ça change plus c’est la même chose, is an abuse of SF for purposes
of trivial sensationalism” (79).
sees fit: “Were this a story, I should tell at length how much we were helped by the good fortune of picking up a Utopian coin of gold, how at last we adventured into the Utopian inn and found it all [marvelously] easy … it will be a convenient accident if it is sufficient to make us solvent for a day or so, until we are a little more informed of the economic system into which we have come” (41, 53-54). Thus, Henry James surmised that Wells’s writing was “not only alive, but kicking” (qtd. in Chesterton 227), despite a “famous quarrel” between the two that according to Suvin “resulted in a draw rather than in the vindication of the psychological novel the Jamesians saw in it” and “is a clear example of the collision between the ‘anatomic’ or allegorical and the ‘novelistic’ or individualistic orientations” (49). Meanwhile, G. K. Chesterton praised Wells’s “vigorous and unaffected readiness for a lark” (227). Among Wells’s more recent critics, Brooks Landon notes that Wells’s narratives are “more sociologically focused and less obviously plausible” (24), suggesting a satirical rather than a novelistic focus.

Further, the Voice acknowledges potentially troubling elements in such earlier utopias as that of More and even of Plato’s *Republic*. The Voice notes that in earlier utopian literature, “either slave labour … or at least class distinctions involving unavoidable labour in the lower class, have been assumed … (More gave his Utopians bondsmen *sans phrase* for their most disagreeable toil)” (72). The Voice largely attributes these issues to the collectivism and suppression of individuality of these utopias: “For all the humanity he wins to, through his dramatic device of dialogue, I doubt if anyone has ever been warmed to desire himself a citizen in the Republic of Plato; I doubt if anyone could stand a month of the relentless publicity of virtue planned by More. … No one wants to live in any community of intercourse really, save for the sake of the individualities he would meet there” (14). The Voice notes that to More, Plato, and other early utopians, “freedom was relatively trivial. Clearly they considered virtue and
happiness as entirely separable from liberty, and as being altogether more important things” (28),
a priority anathema to modern humanity. This anxiety, in turn, anticipates that of later dystopian
authors such as Orwell and Burgess concerning the forcible erasure of individualities: “Until you
bring in individualities, nothing comes into being, and a Universe ceases when you shiver the
mirror of the least of individual minds. … The alternative is a Utopia of dolls in the likeness of
angels—imaginary laws to fit incredible people, an unattractive undertaking … only the dead
things, the choiceless things, live in absolute obedience to law” (14, 23, 28). In particular, the
Voice argues that “to the modern-minded man it can be no sort of Utopia worth desiring that
does not give the utmost freedom of going to and fro. Free movement is to many people one of
the greatest of life’s privileges—to go wherever the spirit moves them, to wander and see—and
though they have every comfort, every security, every virtuous discipline, they will still be
unhappy if that is denied them … whenever economic and political developments set a class free
to travel, that class at once begins to travel” (31, 36). This principle contrasts starkly with the
close oversight of movement in More as well as the later travel limitations in Huxley
(particularly that few have the freedom to visit the Savage Reservation) and especially in Orwell.
According to the Voice, “We want to go apart from the great crowd, not so much to be alone as
to be with those who appeal to us particularly and to whom we particularly appeal” (32); thus,
Winston and Julia’s great sin against the Party in their forbidden liaison in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
is to prefer each other’s exclusive company over that of their other comrades.

However, Wells notes also the limitations to freedom that humanity’s social nature and
the laws of nature prescribe. According to Wells’s Voice, freedom and law are not necessarily at
odds with each other:
[A] general prohibition in a state may increase the sum of liberty, and a general permission may diminish it. It does not follow … that a man is more free where there is least law and more restricted where there is most law. A socialism or a communism is not necessarily a slavery, and there is no freedom under Anarchy. Consider how much liberty we gain by the loss of the common liberty to kill. Thereby one may go to and fro in all the ordered parts of the earth, unencumbered by arms or armour, free of the fear of playful poison, whimsical barbers or hotel trapdoors. Indeed, it means freedom from a thousand fears and precautions. … Consider the inconvenience of two households in a modern suburb estranged and provided with modern weapons of precision, the inconvenience not only to each other, but to the neutral pedestrian, the practical loss of freedoms all about them. The butcher, if he came at all, would have to come round in an armoured cart. (29)

This vision of anarchy thus anticipates such dystopian developments as Alex and his droogs’ reign of terror in Burgess.35 Wells contrasts prohibition (“thou shalt not”), conditional command (“if you do so-and-so, you must also do so-and-so”), and unconditional command (“whatever you have done or are doing or want to do, you are to do this”), finding that only the latter, often a function of legal or economic exploitation, “destroys freedom altogether” (30).

This concern for social stability as a prerequisite for individual liberty underlies many of the socialist elements of Wells. The Voice argues that utopia “will remain mere dream stuff … until we have shown that at that level the community will still sustain itself” and that “the common liberty of the Utopians will not embrace the common liberty to be unserviceable … all order and security in a State rests on the certainty of getting work done” (53). This utopia thus “has no simple community of goods” as in Morris, and “there is, at any rate, a restriction upon what one may take, a need for evidences of equivalent value, a limitation to human credit” (54). The Voice rejects more modern utopian alternatives to money in the utopias of More, Morris, Bellamy, and others, arguing that “no device of labour credits or free demand of commodities

35 Among American works of dystopia, Octavia Butler’s Parable of the Sower (1993) and Parable of the Talents (1998) depict a California replete with suburban warfare, ubiquitous weaponry, and armored vehicles, as well as a resurgence in company towns, all of which cumulatively erode the liberties Wells describes, until a more conventionally authoritarian dystopia emerges in Parable of the Talents.
from a central store or the like has ever been suggested that does not give ten thousand times
more scope for that inherent moral dross in man that must be reckoned with in any sane Utopia
we may design and plan.” In contrast to More’s ignoble use of gold in his Utopia, Wells’s Voice
argues that money, “did you but use it right, is a good thing in life, a necessary thing in civilized
human life … the water of the body social … the reconciliation of human interdependence of
liberty” (55), though he notes the liabilities to the system inherent in the fluctuation of the value
of gold (56), and he notes approvingly a proposal to replace money with “force … measured in
units of energy” similar to the system in Butler’s Erewhon (56). The Voice advocates taxation as
a means to influence development, deter enclosure of land, and encourage or discourage children
as localized demographic agendas dictate (35, 40), leading a detractor to criticize that “we
make birth artificial, life artificial, death artificial” much as the later World State of Brave New
World does on a more extreme level (86). The Voice suggests further that the Utopians “will
conduct research by the army corps” rather than backed by capital, ridiculing the preponderance
of the latter on Earth: “Fools make researches and wise men exploit them—that is our earthly
way of dealing with the question, and we thank Heaven for an assumed abundance of financially
impotent and sufficiently ingenious fools” (46). Moreover, in this utopia the State is “the
universal landowner” and has a monopoly on energy (57), and it acts as “the reserve employer of
labour” rather than allowing a parochial workhouse to serve the purpose as in Dickensian Britain
(97), wherein it is “administered grudgingly … as unwilling charity by administrators who are
often … competing for low-priced labour” (98). The Voice suggests that this land “will be leased
out to companies or individuals, but—in view of the unknown necessities of the future—never

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36 However, the Voice also inveighs against “the immeasurable error of making … control of the drink traffic a source of public revenue” (49).
for a longer period than, let us say, fifty years” (70). The utopia of Wells thus replicates a view
of ownership of land analogous to that elaborated in the Mosaic Law, in which a Year of Jubilee
occurs every fifty years and in which no land can be sold permanently but is “bought” and “sold”
on the basis of the number of years remaining until the next Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25.8-24).

Meanwhile, although the Voice argues against the failings of the capitalist system, the
Voice’s attitude toward capitalism itself is more complex. The Voice suggests that the
“economic history of the world, where it is not the history of the theory of property, is very
largely the record of the abuse, not so much of money as of credit devices to supplement money,
to amplify the scope of this most precious invention” (55). On the one hand, the Voice notes
that “a man without some negotiable property is a man without freedom, and the extent of his
property is very largely the measure of his freedom. Without any property, without even shelter
or food, a man … is in servitude to his needs until he has secured property to satisfy them.”
However, the Voice acknowledges also that “speedily, under terrestrial conditions, the property
of a man may reach such proportions that his freedom oppresses the freedom of others,” thus
threatening the principle of “a universal maximum of individual freedom” (66-67). Nevertheless,
the Voice argues for a role of capitalism in ensuring innovation:

All new machinery, all new methods, all uncertain and variable and non-universal
undertakings, are no business for the State; they commence always as experiments of
unascertained value, and next after the invention of money, there is no invention [that]
has so facilitated freedom and progress as the invention of the limited liability company
to do this work of trial and adventure. (68-69)

37 Cf., for instance, the silver/bimetallism and fiat currency movements in late nineteenth-century America as
exemplified in William Jennings Bryan’s 1896 “Cross of Gold” speech, the “iron coinage” of Plato (Wells 54), and
Marx and Engels’s advocacy in The Communist Manifesto of centralized credit and capital under State ownership.
However, the Voice also notes various issues with a gold standard system of limited monetary supply:
[A] monetary system based on a relatively small amount of gold … fluctuated unreasonably and supplied
no real criterion of well-being, that the nominal values of things and enterprises had no clear and simple
relation to the real physical prosperity of the community, that the nominal wealth of a community …
measured nothing but the quantity of hope in the air, and an increase of confidence meant an inflation of
credit and a pessimistic phase a collapse of this hallucination of possessions. (60)
Accordingly, social safety nets exist in part “to give a man every inducement to spend his surplus money in intensifying the quality of his surroundings, either by economic adventures … or in increasing the beauty, the pleasure, the abundance and promise of life.” Where capitalism fails to lead to such innovation, the Voice argues, it becomes counterproductive to society. However, the Voice suggests that the market itself often corrects this issue: “The ‘safe investment’ … that permanent, undying claim upon the community, is just one of those things Utopia will discourage; which indeed the developing security of civilization quite automatically discourages through the fall in the rate of interest” (69). Wells is thus “socialist enough to write, in reaction to the phenomenal success of Bellamy’s utopia, a complacent vision of a cooperative world of nationalized capitalism where technology benignly underpins the resolution of labor conflict” in *Modern Utopia* (Luckhurst 322). The Voice also expresses caution against authoritarianism in law enforcement: “the modern Utopians, having systematized their sociology, will have given some attention to the psychology of minor officials, a matter altogether too much neglected by the social reformer on earth. They will not put into the hands of a common policeman powers direct and indirect that would be dangerous to the public in the hands of a judge” (Wells 48-49). The Voice advocates for a middle position between the extremes of individualism and collectivism: “To the onlooker, both Individualism and Socialism are, in the absolute, absurdities; the one would make men the slaves of the violent or rich, the other the slaves of the State official, and the way of sanity runs, perhaps even sinuously, down the intervening valley” (64). However, Wells’s utopia foreshadows those of Zamyatin and others in identifying citizens by alphanumeric codes (77), thus dehumanizing them. The Voice further suggests individualism to be a greater threat to utopia than collectivism:
Something is needed wide and deep enough to float the worst of egotisms away … to tell of just land laws and wise government, a wisely balanced economic system, and wise social arrangements without telling … how they are sustained against the vanity and self-indulgence, the moody fluctuations and uncertain imaginations, the heat and aptitude for partisanship that lurk, even when they do not flourish, in the texture of every man alive, is to build a palace without either door or staircase. (90)

Wells’s Voice eschews also the smaller-scale, geographically isolated utopias of More and of Butler. The Voice notes that “the whole trend of modern thought is against the permanence of any such enclosures. We are acutely aware nowadays that, however subtly contrived a State may be, outside your boundary lines the epidemic, the breeding barbarian or the economic power will gather its strength to overcome you.” The Voice argues further that a modern utopian state would inherently replicate and expand the imperialism of More’s Utopia: “A State powerful enough to keep isolated under modern conditions would be powerful enough to rule the world, would be, indeed, if not actively ruling yet passively acquiescent in all other human organizations, and so responsible for them altogether. World State, therefore, it must be” (15). Wells’s Voice thus anticipates such later world states as those of Zamyatin and Huxley, which exert hegemony even over such outlying territories as the Savage Reservation of Brave New World, as well as the constantly warring yet symbiotic regimes of Oceania and its rivals, and their dominance over the disputed territories, in Nineteen Eighty-Four. The Voice further posits that the “whole world will surely have a common language, that is quite elementarily Utopian” (18), and that thus the “modern Utopia will have done with yapping about nationality, and so the ugly fortifications, the barracks and military defilements … will be wanting” (78).  

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38 Chesterton argues that Wells’s position is “that great wars between great powers are absurd, but that it might be necessary, in policing the planet, to force backward peoples to open their resources to cosmopolitan commerce. In other words, he defends the only sort of war I thoroughly despise, the bullying of small states for their oil or gold; and he despises the only sort of war that I really defend, a war of civilisations and religions, to determine the moral destiny of mankind” (230). This contrast proves useful in analyzing war in dystopian settings: while Oceania, for example, presents its perpetual warfare with Eurasia and Eastasia as the latter type of conflict, Goldstein’s analysis suggests that it in fact fits into the former type. Chesterton equally condemned imperialism “spread by economic
Although Wells employs time travel in his *The Time Machine* (1895), in *A Modern Utopia* he still separates his utopia from modern Earth geographically, rather than chronologically as Morris and Bellamy had done before him and numerous dystopian authors would do in later works. The Voice places this utopia “beyond Sirius … beyond the flight of a cannonball flying for a billion years” (15), and the Owner of the Voice and his botanist companion are “translated even as we stood” and “in the twinkling of an eye we are in that other world” by means Wells leaves unclear (16).

Wells also articulates many concerns about language and epistemology that recur in Orwell and Lewis. Wells argues that modernists frequently demand “a scientific language … without ambiguity, as precise as mathematical formulae, and with every term in relations of exact logical consistency with every other. It will be a language with all the inflections of verbs and nouns regular and all its constructions inevitable, each word clearly distinguishable from every other word in sound as well as spelling” (20). These demands anticipate many features of Orwell’s Newspeak. Meanwhile, the Voice argues, in matters of epistemology, there “is no abiding thing in what we know. We change from weaker to stronger lights, and each more powerful light pierces our hitherto opaque foundations and reveals fresh and different opacities below” (21). In *Out of the Silent Planet*, meanwhile, Ransom learns similar epistemology from one of the natives of Malacandra: “The swiftest thing that touches our senses is light. We do not truly see light, we only see slower things lit by it, so that for us light is on the edge—the last thing we know before things become too swift for us” (94).

pressure or snobbish fashion [rather] than by conquest” (qtd. in Clark 49). Chesterton further argues that “if there were no longer our modern strife between nations, there would only be a strife between Utopias” (qtd. in Clark 68), or perhaps between dystopias, as in Orwell.
The highly organized and at times authoritarian nature of Wells’s World State offers a stark contrast to Morris’s vision of human creativity and freedom. Throughout his utopian fiction, Pierce suggests, Wells “depended on the emergence of a new guardian class, the Saints who would lead mankind to New Jerusalem”:

Like some John the Baptist, he sought saviors to anoint: the Fabian Society at the time of *A Modern Utopia*, internationalist statesmen in *The World Set Free* (1914), and airmen and engineers in *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933). Even after World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution, which resulted in widespread disillusionment with both science and socialism, Wells could find no salvation for mankind but the Modern State. (100)

Rabkin similarly argues that while in *A Modern Utopia* Wells “tames his own Victorian need to escape technology by creating a non-scientist ruling elite,” in *The Shape of Things to Come* Wells “is able to recommend a world run by the benevolent despotism of the engineers” (154). Thus, according to Garrett, Wells “tries, by the brave accumulation of reassuring verbiage, to persuade his readers that individual freedom and creativeness will survive in such a regimented world.” However, Garrett notes also that Wells “was conscious of some of the dilemmas of modern Utopia. Will the World State, which standardizes life, smother individuality? Will comfort remove aspiration? Will bureaucracy (so necessary for our physical welfare and safety) stifle human liberty? Will human history become static?” (54). M. Keith Booker suggests that Wells’s larger oeuvre “was at the forefront of the turn from utopian to dystopian visions of the future” (“English” 32), and Suvin identifies *A Modern Utopia* as first in a “series of programmatic utopias” including *Men Like Gods* (1923), inspired by a visit to the Soviet Union under Lenin (219)\(^3\); *The Shape of Things to Come*; and *The Holy Terror* (1939). Arthur B. Evans likewise points out that Wells’s work overall “caution[s] against the dangers that [new]

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\(^3\) According to Suvin, Wells’s visit occurred “in the midst of the Volga famine,” and Lenin “confidently tracing plans for a fully electrified self-governing Russia” led Wells to “recognize in the author of *State and Revolution* a utopian dreamer” (253).
knowledge might bring to an imperfect and ever-changing world” (50), and Suvin argues that A Modern Utopia is the culmination of a transition in utopias from the idea of “absolute perfection” to that of “a state radically better or based on a more perfect principle than that prevailing in the author’s community” (45). Garrett’s questions, in turn, lie at the heart of many of the popular canonical dystopias of later decades such as Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four. While Wells “judiciously considers” these possibilities “only to conclude that all will be for the best in the end” (Garrett 54), later authors such as Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell addressed these questions far less sanguinely.

Thus, while Butler’s satire of British imperialist capitalism invokes prototypically dystopian as well as utopian elements, the quasi-Pelagian optimism toward human nature of Morris and particularly Wells departs significantly from the Augustinian precedent of More. Whereas More satirizes the capitalist excesses of his day, and the dialogue of Utopia leaves the feasibility of Utopia’s policies as a matter for debate, Wells offers concrete and systematic agendas for authoritarian utopia. However, later historical developments would lead speculative fiction authors to skepticism toward these agendas and toward authoritarian attempts at enacting utopia.
CHAPTER 3
MODERNIST DYSTOPIA, 1917-1949

While such late nineteenth-century British authors as Samuel Butler and William Morris and the early work of H. G. Wells exhibited optimism regarding the plausibility of utopia on Earth, the speculative fiction of Britain post-World War I and especially after World War II offered a much more pessimistic view of the tendency of humanity and of government. In this era, Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World* and George Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, following the precedents of such post-Bolshevik Revolution authors in the Soviet Union as Yevgeny Zamyatin, present bleak counterpoints to the early modernist utopias of Butler, Morris, and Wells. However, many dystopian issues in Huxley and Orwell represent a natural and incremental development of dystopian issues that the earlier modern utopias anticipated.

From Utopia to Dystopia

The authors of early modernist utopias often conceived of social and technological change as heralding a better existence for all of humanity. Erich Fromm notes that the beginning of the twentieth century marked the culmination of a utopian tradition extending from Thomas More’s *Utopia* to such late nineteenth-century utopias as Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* (314-15). This utopian conceit of a better life for all found support in demographic changes in the late nineteenth century. Economist Jeffrey A. Tucker argues that during this era, “[incomes] rose and lifetimes had expanded like never before in history. Such gains applied to all races and
classes … The great unwashed masses were living longer and reproducing faster.” Although Morris and Butler viewed capitalism as pernicious, and Morris in particular based his utopia on socialist principles, Tucker credits the expansion of wealth and longevity to “a massive expansion of markets, technology, and trade.” Thus, the specialization of labor no longer inherently led to stratification, and a more equitable society became possible.

Although such late nineteenth-century utopians as William Morris envisioned a society with less specialization and stratification, authors and critics in both contemporary and later eras found Morris’s paradigm controversial. Science fiction critic and theorist Darko Suvin, among later critics, considers Morris’s News from Nowhere to be “the finest specimen of Earthly Paradise story in modern literature” (182), and he suggests that the “Earthly Paradise” of Morris “is an analogy to the classless socialist day.” However, following Wells’s earlier criticism of Morris, Suvin argues also that while Morris opposes “bourgeois existential horizons,” he offers instead “unrealistically idealized preindustrial—indeed bohemian—horizons” (184-85), and News from Nowhere thus “sacrifices human productivity in order to get rid of Statism and technocracy” (182). Goldstein’s book in Nineteen Eighty-Four argues against the agrarian utopia of Morris as impractical in an increasingly globalist milieu:

To return to the agricultural past, as some thinkers about the beginning of the twentieth century dreamed of doing, was not a practical solution. It conflicted with the tendency toward mechanization which had become quasi-instinctive throughout almost the whole world, and moreover, any country which remained industrially backward was helpless in a military sense and was bound to be dominated, directly or indirectly, by its more advanced rivals. (190)

Although Thomas Reed Whissen argues that the dystopia as realized in Huxley is “a modern invention that had its start with … Erewhon” (38), Károly Pintér notes that Huxley realized that “the favorite gesture of anti-utopists, pitting ‘untouched’ nature and the ‘natural man’ against the
artificial, technicized puritanism of utopian visions, would not suffice” in *Brave New World*.

Huxley’s “strong critical sense and grotesque view of his contemporary world did not allow him to idolize the marginal, pre-industrial culture and the abject poverty of New Mexico Indians as a credible alternative to the mechanized and uniformized Wellsian-American utopia” (151).

Although Huxley’s World State opts to “keep a third of the population on the land … because it takes longer to get food out of the land than out of a factory” despite the fact that they “could synthesize every morsel of food” if they so desired (*Brave* 202), the society remains overwhelmingly urbanized rather than agrarian.

An egalitarian increase in living conditions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, meanwhile, threatened contemporary oligarchical systems of power. In particular, Tucker suggests, it “worried the white ruling class in most European countries and in the United States.” Among Anglophone literary figures especially, “all the founders of modern literary culture—from H. G. Wells to T. S. Elliot [sic]—loathed the new prosperity … As Wells summed up, ‘The extravagant swarm of new births was the essential disaster of the nineteenth century.” Tucker thus envisions government eugenics efforts of the early twentieth century as a struggle between capitalism and more regressive classist, ageist, and ableist ideologies. British Fabian socialist Sidney Webb, for instance, in 1912 described “the labor of old men, of the feeble-minded, of the decrepit and broken-down invalids” as “parasitic on other classes of the community” (986). Early twentieth-century economist Frank Taussig, meanwhile, wrote in his

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1 By contrast, Oceania in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is replete with such artificial consumables as saccharine and “synthetic gin.” Chemistry professor Shirley Lin notes that the Party may “take shortcuts” in making synthetic gin and that clove-flavored gin in particular would contain “a large amount of eugenol … clove gin would be ideal for hastening an alcoholic to his grave since both excessive alcohol consumption and eugenol cause liver damage.” This gin could thus figure significantly in the project to reduce human longevity that O’Brien describes to Winston (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 269).
Principles of Economics (1911) that “the unemployable … should simply be stamped out … We have not reached the stage where we can proceed to chloroform them once and for all; but at least they can be segregated, shut up in refuges and asylums, and prevented from propagating their kind” (qtd. in Tucker). Meanwhile, elements of racism, racial stratification, and anti-Semitism also entered into these arguments of eugenics, as Wells’s musings on race illustrate:

How will the New Republic treat the inferior races? How will it deal with the black? How will it deal with the yellow man? How will it deal with that alleged termite in the civilized woodwork, the Jew? … If the Jew has a certain incurable tendency to social parasitism, and we make social parasitism impossible, we shall abolish the Jew … The Jew will probably lose much of his particularism, intermarry with Gentiles and cease to be a physically distinct element in human affairs in a century or so. … And for the rest—those swarms of black and brown and yellow people who do not come into the new needs of efficiency? Well, the world is not a charitable institution, and I take it that they will have to go. (qtd. in Clark 222)

Wells identifies class as well as racial elements in his eugenics agenda, envisioning “‘a land legislation that will keep the black or yellow or mean-white squatter on the move’ to prevent their procreating” (Clark 116).² Despite “glib assurances” of Wells, “a favorite theme … had been the eugenic selection and breeding of superior individuals … on more than one occasion he had recommended the sterilization of the criminal and dull-witted” (Garrett 54). Tucker characterizes the agenda of Taussig and other reactionaries as a “polite gulag,” and Taussig’s invocation of asylums and lethal gases prefigures the mid-twentieth century atrocities of totalitarians on both the far right and the far left. These depredations, in turn, inspire the totalitarian practices of such regimes as the Ingsoc Party in Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four:

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² Clark further identifies Wells’s eugenics behind the attitude of Weston in Lewis’s Out of the Silent Planet that “a mildly feeble-minded boy” was “incapable of serving humanity and only too likely to propagate idiocy … who in a civilised community would be automatically handed over to a state laboratory for experimental purposes. … Really, almost a—a preparation” rather than truly human (116; Silent 21). According to Clark, “Naïve readers may have supposed that Lewis was exaggerating. Unfortunately, Hitler did exactly what plenty of intellectuals had said was right” (116).
during his interrogation of Winston, O’Brien threatens that the Party “shall turn you [Winston] into gas and pour you into the stratosphere. Nothing will remain of you” (254).

Although Tucker enthusiastically advocates the free-market capitalism that is anathema to so many socialist utopian authors, leftist criticism corroborates some important elements of his analysis. Orwell, a veteran of the Republican coalition against fascism in the Spanish Civil War whose socialism permeates his journalism, writes a similar history of reaction against egalitarianism and social mobility into Goldstein’s forbidden book, *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*. Like Tucker, Goldstein identifies a modern trend of increasing wealth, suggesting that “since the end of the nineteenth century, the problem of what to do with the surplus of consumption goods has been latent in industrial society” (188). Accordingly, Goldstein argues, “[in] the early twentieth century, the vision of a future society unbelievably rich, leisured, orderly and efficient—a glittering antiseptic world of glass and steel and snow-white concrete—was part of the consciousness of nearly every literate person. Science and technology were developing at a prodigious speed, and it seemed natural to assume they would go on developing” (188-89). Goldstein also notes the threat of such widespread prosperity to oligarchical rule, contending that “an all-round increase in wealth threatened the destruction—indeed, in some sense was the destruction—of a hierarchical society”:

In a world in which everyone worked short hours, had enough to eat, lived in a house with a bathroom and a refrigerator, and possessed a motorcar … the most obvious and perhaps the most important form of inequality would already have disappeared. If it once became general, wealth would confer no distinction. It was possible, no doubt, to imagine a society in which wealth, in the sense of personal possessions and luxuries, should be evenly distributed, while power remained in the hands of a small privileged caste. But in practice such a society could not long remain stable. For if leisure and security were enjoyed by all alike, the great mass of human beings who are normally stupefied by poverty would become literate and would learn to think for themselves; and when once they had done this, they would sooner or later realize that the privileged minority had no
function, and they would sweep it away. In the long run, a hierarchical society was only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance. (189-90)

Goldstein, who divides humanity into the High, Middle, and Low, argues that while the Low wish, when politically self-aware, to “abolish all distinctions and create a society in which all men shall be equal,” the Middle and High each wish to maintain a hierarchical society while placing themselves at its apex (201). Thus, when equality became possible, “from the point of view of the new groups who were on the point of seizing power, human equality was no longer an ideal to be striven after, but a danger to be averted” (204). Thus, Goldstein contends, “[the] problem was how to keep the wheels of industry turning without increasing the real wealth of the world. Goods must be produced, but they need not be distributed” (190-91).

Both Nineteen Eighty-Four and Huxley’s Brave New World thus offer in their respective dystopian visions different expedients for consuming the products of industry without increasing the wealth of the people. For Huxley, this expedient was indoctrinated consumerism, reinforced with hypnopaedic slogans such as “Ending is better than mending” and “The more stitches, the less riches” (Brave 31, 37-38, 55). Mond argues to John Savage that “industrial civilization is only possible when there’s no self-denial.” Instead he prescribes self-indulgence “up to the very limits imposed by hygiene and economics. Otherwise the wheels stop turning” (212). “Universal happiness keeps the wheels steadily turning,” Mond argues; “truth and beauty can’t” (205). For Orwell, this expedient was perpetual warfare between Oceania and its rival states Eurasia and Eastasia, which, according to Goldstein, is a method of disposing of “materials which might otherwise be used to make the masses too comfortable, and hence, in the long run, too intelligent … a general state of scarcity increases the importance of small privileges and thus magnifies the distinction between one group and another” (191). However, poverty or scarcity is a means
rather than a uniform end: once O’Brien and the Ministry of Love have neutralized Winston as a potential agent of opposition, the Party provides for Winston comfortably. Winston spends the remainder of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a regular patron of the Chestnut Tree Café, whose staff keep him saturated with gin and distracted with newspaper chess puzzles, and his new job, a sinecure, provides him ample income to cover his drinking tab while demanding little of his time or of what remains of his intellect (287-89, 294-95).³

Post-Revolutionary Dystopia

The First World War and especially the Bolshevik Revolution likewise played a pivotal role in the development of utopian and dystopian fiction in the era. Although Orwell wrote of Wells as the “inspired prophet of the Edwardian age” (qtd. in Rodden 405), and Orwell further claimed that “[thinking] people who were born about the beginning of this century are in some sense Wells’s own creation” (“Wells” 97), Wells “came to seem an anachronism soon after the watershed of World War I” (Rodden 405). Orwell writes in “Wells, Hitler and the World State” (1941) that while Hitler was a “criminal lunatic” (93), Wells excessively emphasized rationality and an overly optimistic estimate of progress, arguing instead that the “energy that actually shapes the world springs from emotions—racial pride, leader-worship, religious belief, love of war—which liberal intellectuals write off as anachronisms, and which they have usually

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³ Kathryn Hume points out that D-503 in *We* is similarly “forcibly converted,” but notes also that the “horror of *We* is that the hero can be made totally obedient and happy by surgical means, yet apparently remain useful to the state professionally. The state has no cause therefore to hold back.” In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, however, “a mind can be broken to the point that it really believes two plus two to be any amount Big Brother says, but Smith’s obvious uselessness thereafter makes that torture process one not to be employed lightly” (112). Thus Orwell’s vision of Winston tortured into submission marks a marginal improvement over Zamyatin’s paradigm from the perspective of retaining individuality and liberty.
destroyed so completely in themselves as to have lost all power of action” (94). Similarly, Orwell argues, the Bolsheviks “were not introducing a Wellsian Utopia but a Rule of the Saints, which, like the English Rule of the Saints, was a military despotism enlivened by witchcraft trials” (96). G. K. Chesterton similarly notes the disillusioning effect the war had on authors such as Wells: “He began by calling the Allied effort, The War That Will End War. He has ended by saying … that it was no better than a forest fire and that it settled nothing” (252-53). However, he notes also that Wells’s conclusion may represent only a correction to Wells’s earlier, more optimistic perspective on war:

[The First World War] settled exactly what it set out to settle. But that was something rather more rational and modest than what Mr. Wells had settled that it was to settle. To tell a soldier defending his country that it is The War That Will End War is exactly like telling a workman, naturally rather reluctant to do his day’s work, that it is The Work That Will End Work. We never promised to put a final end to all war or all work or all worry. We only said that we were bound to endure something very bad because the alternative was something worse. (254)

Chesterton’s own fiction, particularly his The Napoleon of Notting Hill (1904) set in the year 1984, further reflects this ambivalence about the future even prior to the Great War. Chesterton saw “not the triumph of Science and the march of Progress of the Wells fantasies, nor the sterilised pagan world of Aldous Huxley’s prophecy,” but, “as George Orwell later saw, the approaching danger of the authoritarian State”; however, “Chesterton, with his innate optimism, 4

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4 Orwell further argues that these limitations are not exclusive to Wells. For instance, Orwell suggests that Kipling is “pre-Fascist” in that Kipling “still believes that pride comes before a fall and that the gods punish hubris. He does not foresee the tank, the bombing plane, the radio and the secret police, or their psychological results.” Orwell argues also that “Gandhi, who after all was born in 1869, did not understand the nature of totalitarianism” and that the advent of totalitarianism made Gandhi’s views outdated (qtd. in Alldritt 119).

5 Stephen R. L. Clark suggests that Orwell’s later dystopia is “probably not coincidentally named” in relation to Chesterton’s work (41). Clark further argues that Gabriel Syme of The Man Who Was Thursday inspired the Party philologist named Syme in Nineteen Eighty-Four (50-51, 213n5). Christopher Hollis adds further that in Chesterton’s The Ball and the Cross (1905-06), “Lucifer’s plan to make Turnbull and Maclan into non-beings, by destroying all the evidence of their existence,” anticipates the Party’s tendency to make unpersons of whoever disobeys them (94).
believed, as Orwell did not, that eventually human beings would throw off the chains of the authoritarian State” (Barker 141).

Meanwhile, a Bolshevik revolution modeled on the Marxist paradigm in particular represented the opportunity to enact socialist reform along the lines Morris, Bellamy, and other socialist authors of utopia had envisioned. According to Suvin, H. G. Wells’s visit to the Soviet Union and meeting with Lenin significantly influenced his writing of *Men Like Gods*, in which Wells “gave a … glimpse of a Morris-like brightness” (219). Suvin points out also “the general enthusiasm for a revolutionary ‘storming of the heavens’ in the 1920s, as expressed by Bryusov, Mayakovsky, and the ‘Cosmists,’ and skeptically reflected even in Zamyatin’s *We*” (260). John J. Pierce likewise demonstrates the “hubris of altruism” in *We* (173), noting the One State’s ambition to “subjugate the unknown beings on other planets, who may still be living in the primitive condition of freedom, to the beneficent yoke of reason. If they fail to understand that we bring them mathematically perfect happiness, it will be our duty to compel them to be happy” (172). Similarly, Rob Latham observes that “the Bolshevik Revolution was a ‘remarkable launching pad for utopian science fiction,’ generating some [two hundred] titles during the 1920s” as well as “less sanguine works” such as *We*, which “depicted the Communist future as an authoritarian dystopia” (383). Meanwhile, Gregory Claeys notes that this revolution and its accompanying propaganda and artwork “was the largest attempt ever made to remould human nature and to subordinate the individual to the community” (182). Orwell accordingly depicts such material frequently in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Claeys points out that this propaganda offered “a constant succession of images of heroic tractor drivers, engineers, peasants and soldiers” (182), and Oceania pays homage to such imagery by making working-class overalls the uniform of the Party even among such Inner Party members as O’Brien (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 10).
Claeys notes also that in “every communist nation that had been created by an anti-imperialist revolution, cults emerged … around heroic events and heroic individuals,” citing such examples as Che Guevara, the Cuban repulsion of the United States in the Bay of Pigs invasion, and the Vietnamese resistance against the United States (182). Orwell wrote in a 1946 review of We that Zamyatin’s “intuitive grasp of the irrational side of totalitarianism—human sacrifice, cruelty as an end in itself, the worship of the Leader who is credited with divine attributes … makes [We] superior to” Brave New World (qtd. in Gottlieb 241). Oceania similarly maintains a cult of Big Brother, and the Party further maintains cults of lesser Party figures, just as a young Vietnamese girl salvaging the tail of a crashed American aircraft became a symbol of communist resistance to America (Claeys 182), though these cults are ephemeral and their subjects easily replaceable when necessary. Winston rewrites a newspaper article praising a Comrade Withers, who had previously been the honoree of Big Brother’s Order for the Day, when Withers falls out of favor and is executed and declared an unperson or “nonexistent person.” In Withers’s place, Winston invents and eulogizes a fictitious Comrade Ogilvy in his rewriting of the article (Nineteen Eighty-Four 44-48). As Pierce points out, Winston “doesn’t know whether previous versions of the past he ‘corrects’ were any truer” (176).

Dystopian visions such as Orwell’s largely superseded more optimistic counterparts such as that of Wells’s A Modern Utopia in the long-term wake of the Bolshevik Revolution. Nikolai Berdyaev, a Marxist exiled to northern Russia under the tsarist regime, became disillusioned with the totalitarianism of the nascent Bolshevik government, culminating in a Cheka interrogation and Berdyaev’s expulsion from the Soviet Union in 1922 until his death in exile in
Meanwhile, Yevgeny Zamyatin’s *We* complicates the utopian paradigm of Morris and other earlier authors. According to Suvin, “the basic values of *We* imply a stubborn revolutionary vision of a classless new moral world free from all social alienations, a vision common to Anarchism and libertarian Marxism. Zamyatin confronts an anti-utopian absolutistic, military-type control—extrapolated both from the bourgeois and early socialist state practices—with a utopian-socialist norm” (257). Suvin therefore argues that Zamyatin “thought of himself as a utopian, paradoxically more revolutionary than the latter-day Bolsheviks, since ‘the truths of today are the errors of tomorrow: there is no final number’” (256). Thus, Zamyatin does not merit the “criticism … as a reactionary” with which such critics as Marie Louise Berneri have condemned him (Pierce 175). Instead, according to Patricia Warrick, Zamyatin demonstrates that “given man’s individuality, freedom, and creativity … revolution and change are inevitable. The possibility of establishing a permanent and static utopia must be discarded if man’s unique qualities are to survive” (203). This rejection of static utopia follows that of Wells in *A Modern Utopia*. In turn, M. Keith Booker suggests that Orwell’s satire, “aimed not at the Revolution itself but at the betrayal of that Revolution … echoes *We*, which suggests that revolution must be an ongoing process lest it lead to tyranny” (“English” 35). Gottlieb concurs that “just as the Russian Revolution against the [tsarist] exploiter was fully justified, so the animals on Manor Farm are fully justified in overthrowing their cruel human master and in establishing Animal Farm. However … this human exploiter with a whip is soon supplanted by pig Napoleon, who gradually begins to walk on his hind legs and also carry a whip” (244). Pintér observes that such

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6 Berdyaev’s French epigraph to Huxley’s *Brave New World* reflects this skepticism toward utopias: Berdyaev argues that while utopias have become far more realizable than at times in the past, the more pertinent issue has become instead the question of how to avoid utopia, to create a less perfect but freer society (*Brave 1*).
dystopias as *We* and *Brave New World* “are motivated by the same belief in the potentialities of human history but without the optimistic outlook of utopians”:

The typical answer of dystopian authors in the 20th century is the insistence on individual liberty as a fundamental yardstick against which utopian promises of universal happiness are to be measured. Hence the characteristic dystopian narrative model: the story of the misfit, who somehow differs from the rest of the community and grows dissatisfied with the supposedly perfect conditions under which he or she is supposed to exist. As the hero begins to look for a way out of “utopia,” the narrative centers on his or her struggle for … personal freedom against what is revealed as an oppressive socio-political regime. (140-41)

However, Suvin notes also that the narrative of *We* “obscures the problem of whether any utopia—even a dynamic one that refuses More’s Platonic and Christian model—must of inherent necessity become repressive and dehumanizing” (257). Kathryn Hume suggests that in *We* as well as *Nineteen Eighty-Four, Brave New World*, and other such dystopias, freedom “is necessary for individuality. Making man into a happy machine, however, robs life of its sense of meaning. Freedom blights happiness for many people, but ensured happiness for the greatest number can only be achieved by abolishing freedom” (111). Pierce likewise observes that the ill-fated rebellion against the One State in *We* aims to hijack the spaceship *Integral* and “use it to bear the spirit of freedom instead of slavery into the universe” (173). Roger Luckhurst points out also that Taylorism, which advocated mechanization of labor, “was not intrinsically capitalist: the dominant faction of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union also embraced it, setting up the Central Labor Institute to roll out Taylorist principles … talk of ‘proletarian units’ rather than individuals functioned to reduce people to codes of numbers and letters,” provoking Zamyatin’s *We* as “a scathing satire of an entirely Taylorized, postindividual future” in which characters have no names but instead such alphanumeric identity codes as D-503, the point-of-view character, and I-330 (324). Suvin further identifies in *We* a paradigm that “equates Leninist
Communism with institutionalized Christianity and models its fable on an inevitable Fall from Eden ending in an ironical crucifixion”; thus, Suvin concludes, Zamyatin’s work “has a strong anti-utopian streak” (257), positing that “the new utopian world cannot be a static changeless paradise of a new religion, albeit a religion of steel, mathematics, and interplanetary flights” (258). In *We*, according to Warrick, the “perfect state has been achieved, where there is stability, peace, order, perfection, reason, and—presumably—happiness. Utopia has arrived.” However, protagonist D-503 “is unhappy because he comes to recognize the violation of human nature when the individual is programmed to function on a clockwork schedule. He cannot perform merely as a standardized part in a giant machine. Nor can he function only as a reasoning creature, basing his life on mathematical logic, for man is also a creature of feeling and intuition and creativity” (203). Zamyatin therefore prefigures the “fashionable static dystopia of the Huxley-Orwell model,” which Suvin further identifies as a “metamorphosis of the Apocalypse” (83). Northrop Frye similarly suggests that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* invokes a “parody of religion” and in particular a “parody of the atonement” when Winston begs O’Brien to torture Julia instead of himself (238; cf. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 286). During the Stalinist era of the Soviet Union in particular, science fiction, including utopia and dystopia, suffered from a reputation as a “harmful genre”: as Suvin points out, “Anticipating possible developments became a suicidal pursuit at a time when Stalin was the only one supposed to ‘foresee’ the future, when cosmonautics were mentioned in the same breath with bourgeois cosmopolitism, and a number of scientists and writers … were jailed or indeed executed” (264). As Latham puts it, “the advent of Stalinism basically strangled the developing genre in its crib” (383). However, the genre retained popularity among non-Stalinist socialists outside of the Soviet Union such as Orwell, and its reception varied on political lines: “Anglo-American Communist reviewers denounced
Orwell’s ‘pig’s eye view’” of Bolshevism and Stalinism in *Animal Farm*, while “anti-Stalinist radicals in London and New York greeted *Animal Farm* enthusiastically,” and “conservative reviewers read it as a criticism of the Soviet Union from the Right … not only anti-Stalinist but anti-socialist” (Rodden 24).

In the wake of the Bolshevik revolution, Zamyatin’s *We* also inaugurated a subgenre of communist dystopia or anti-utopia.7 Claeys argues that *We* constitutes “the most important early satire on Bolshevism and a powerful indictment of state centralization and the suppression of individuality” (177), while Suvin identifies Zamyatin as “some of the best social criticism” in the genre of science fiction (230). Like Berdyaev an “ex-Bolshevik and rebel against tsarism” (Suvin 255), Zamyatin ran afoul of “the increasingly dogmatic and bureaucratic high priests of Soviet letters,” who “never allowed his novel to be printed in the USSR … and induced him to leave his country in 1931” (Suvin 256). Claeys notes also that Marxist revolutions frequently led to dictatorships in which “legality either became meaningless or was subordinated to the will of the party” (181). While *Nineteen Eighty-Four* takes place in a future Britain and consigns the Soviet state to forming the core of Oceania’s rival Eurasian state, Orwell’s satire is “addressed to … the western intellectual on the Left, who is unaware of the falsehood implied in worshipping Soviet Russia as a model of socialism” and “complacently believed in the preposterous charges against the accused in Stalin’s purges, uncritically accepting the party line determined by the USSR and spread by the Comintern all over the world” (Gottlieb 241-43). John Rodden points out that because *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* were “written in large part as broadsides against

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7 John J. Pierce argues that “dystopia is not as precise as anti-utopia” in that dystopia “can be set in a future that is evil by neglect, rather than intention,” while “the anti-utopia is directed at a particular kind of evil—that of the planned society.” Pierce cites *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as an anti-utopia and Ridley Scott’s film *Blade Runner* as an example of a dystopia that is not an anti-utopia (168).
Russian state socialism,” they were “highly susceptible by their negative thrust to
misinterpretation” (22), as Orwell fervently supported socialism itself and its iteration in the
British Labour Party (25). Further, according to Damon DeCoste, “Orwell’s Airstrip One … is
the most extreme version of that common diagnosis of the home front’s own embodiment of the
evils ostensibly resisted in the Second World War … that typifies ‘victorious’ London as much
as her fallen foes” (18). Later critics and dystopian authors such as Anthony Burgess thus largely
concurred with Gottlieb and DeCoste in identifying Airstrip One as satirizing postwar Britain
rather than the USSR. Orwell further describes his target as “the effect of the Russian mythos on
the Socialist movement,” arguing that one “cannot build up a healthy Socialist movement if one
is obliged to condone no matter what crime when the USSR commits it” (qtd. in Gottlieb 247). 8

*Nineteen Eighty-Four* thus reflects the same abandonment of the rule of law. Winston
reflects that composing a diary “was not illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer
any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least
by twenty-five years in a forced-labor camp” (6). Goldstein’s book likewise points out that in
Oceania, “there is no law” and that although its citizens have “no freedom of choice in any
direction whatever,” their acts “are not regulated by law or by any clearly formulated code of
behavior”; instead, “actions which, when detected, mean certain death are not formally
forbidden, and the endless purges, arrests, tortures, imprisonments, and vaporizations are not
inflicted as punishment for crimes which have actually been committed, but are merely the

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8 Gottlieb attributes this tendency in part to “Stalingrad syndrome,” wherein “the western world’s gratitude and admiration for the millions of Soviet citizens who died in the war against Hitler was transferred, uncritically, to the Soviet leadership (who did, in effect, send further millions of their own citizens to the Gulag)” (248).
wiping-out of persons who might perhaps commit a crime at some time in the future” (211).

While in Orwell the Soviet Union forms the core of Eurasia, Nineteen Eighty-Four depicts Oceania as having adopted the same Stalinist model of socialism, differing only cosmetically from Eurasian “Neo-Bolshevism” (Nineteen Eighty-Four 203). Claeys also points out that “savage oppression in works such as Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four pales in comparison with the rampant brutality of everyday life in such regimes”:

In Orwell’s text, for example, the proles … are largely untouched by the cruelty used by the party to control its members. But peasants made up the majority of the inmates of Stalin’s gulags. And in Mao’s China, thousands were clubbed, stabbed and kicked to death in public with a savagery that is barely imaginable. Elsewhere millions of ordinary workers were killed, enslaved and starved to death under communism … The scale of mass deaths, however, owes as much to enforced but grossly inefficient industrialization—which produced widespread famine in the USSR, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, and elsewhere—as it does to the anti-humanist ideology of the ruling regimes. (185-86)

Because of these developments, according to Edward James, it “is sometimes said that the ability of the writer to imagine a better place in which to live died in the course of the twentieth century, extinguished by the horrors of total war, of genocide and of totalitarianism … when idealism perished, a victim to twentieth-century pessimism and cynicism” (219). Pierce argues similarly that “utopian fiction … died out around World War I. One can find examples … but none that have had the popularity or impact of Bellamy’s Looking Backward or [Wells’s] A Modern Utopia” (155).

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*9 Like Zamyatin’s We, Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four “was considered a subversive and ideologically dangerous book by Communist governments, and it was banned until 1989-1990 in all Eastern European countries; only illegal translations or surreptitious English texts circulated among intellectuals and students.” However, a resulting “forbidden fruit quality as well as numerous similarities between Orwell’s oppressive fictional world and the drab reality of existing Socialism elevated Nineteen Eighty-Four into [an] underground cult status in Eastern Europe, and it preserved its popularity even two decades after the collapse of Communist regimes” (Pintér 148).

10 James argues, however, that “utopia has not disappeared; it has merely mutated … into something very different from the classic utopia,” particularly within the science fiction genre (219).
Dystopian Satire of Capitalism

 Meanwhile, however, capitalism remained a target of speculative satire even as dystopia replaced utopia as the primary vehicle for such satire. Suvin argues that Zamyatin “despised Western capitalism as life-crushing,” citing such elements as “coupons for sex and a Taylorite ‘table of compulsory salvation’ through minutely regulated daily occupations” as evidence of “a novel satirizing bourgeois respectability and clerical philistinism” in We. Thus, Suvin concludes, it is “disingenuous to present him as a primarily anti-Soviet author” (255-56). Although or perhaps because We was suppressed in the Soviet Union but published in the United States in an English translation, Luckhurst similarly argues, “its American readers [misconstrued] it as a critique of Communism rather than of the principles that underpinned American industrialism” (324). Claeys likewise suggests that Huxley’s Brave New World focuses “not on totalitarianism as such but on behavioural manipulation within capitalism,” noting that Brave New World posits “a rigidly stratified society in which eugenic selection and social engineering secure a privileged ruling class and a vast reservoir of willing labour … The mindless uniformity portrayed in the novel is presented as a real danger lurking within the capitalist system, where a shallow egotism has become increasingly dominant” (178). Huxley’s work thus represents “a satirical rejection of modern capitalism, including the turn toward consumerism that marked capitalism in the 1920s” and “modern consumer capitalism within the context of the Depression-ridden time in which it was written” (Booker, “English” 33). Carolyn Rhodes further identifies Brave New World as a “complacent dystopia, a world in which the citizens are indoctrinated, soothed, and distracted from inconvenient behavior, whether criminal or creative … the quality of life is diminished to the lowest common denominator; citizens are satisfied because they can imagine no other life-
styles, constantly being told that things were worse in former ages” (89). Suvin similarly identifies such mindless uniformity as a concern, identifying “Nazis and robotized masses” as “the worst in modern humanity” (281). J. C. Garrett argues that there is “no doubt that Huxley had Wells in mind as he wrote” (57), and Whissen identifies Brave New World as following “in the tradition of … Wells’s classic [The Shape of] Things to Come as one of the earliest science-fiction utopias to project a future that readers see as practically here” (38), while Pierce suggests that Brave New World is an “indictment of the Wellsian utopia” and Huxley “a leading spokesman for the literary humanist culture against scientific materialism” (162). However, Luckhurst suggests that although Brave New World began as a “response” to Wells’s Men Like Gods, the “immediate target” of Brave New World was not Wells but Henry Ford and Fordist mechanization of labor (323). Huxley points out in Brave New World Revisited that Brave New World “was written before the rise of Hitler to supreme power in Germany and when the Russian tyrant [Stalin] had not yet got into his stride” (238), suggesting that capitalism rather than Nazism or Stalinism is its primary satirical target. Frank McConnell suggests that Brave New World invokes accordingly an “archetypal plot” common to science fiction: “the attempt of a hero, a consciousness trapped in a mechanistic universe, to discover whatever there is of transcendence within or beyond the quotidian” (29).

While dystopian satire of capitalism permeates Huxley, it also recurs prominently in Orwell. Claeys contends that although Nineteen Eighty-Four reflects Orwell’s “political engagement as a socialist during the Spanish Civil War and his subsequent disillusionment with the Soviet Union’s manipulation of the republican cause” (179), it reflects also his concern that “the great dangers facing modernity would emerge as much from capitalism as from communism … Orwell, like Huxley, had a premonition that modern society might literally amuse itself to
death.” Claeys notes that in Orwell the proles, or members of the working class, “are left largely to their own devices, entertained by a diet of hard labour, gambling and cheap amusements” (180). In this respect, according to Suvin, both Huxley and Orwell follow the lead of H. G. Wells. Suvin argues that the “futuristic megalopolis … led by demagogic leaders” in Wells’s *When the Sleeper Wakes* constitutes “a nightmare of Capitalism triumphant” and that Wells’s work “became the model for anti-utopian anticipation” of Zamyatin and others (218). Stephen R. L. Clark notes also that “Wells’s utopian visions in *In the Days of the Comet, Men Like Gods, or A Modern Utopia* may conceive some happy transformation of human nature, but his more pessimistic visions are usually better remembered” (24). Neil Easterbrook further emphasizes that although both *We* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are “antiauthoritarian and thus appealing to libertarians,” neither Zamyatin nor Orwell supported capitalism: “Zamyatin was a communist, Orwell a socialist” (556). Booker further argues that although *Nineteen Eighty-Four* “was typically read during the peak Cold War decade of the 1950s as a denunciation of Soviet Communism,” this reading “appropriated” Orwell’s work “partly because its thoroughgoing rejection of utopianism was so much in tune with a prevailing western Cold War ideology that equated utopianism with the presumably failed Soviet project, completely dismissing both the Soviet Union and utopianism in general” (“English” 36).

The establishment of authoritarian collectivist states following Marxist revolutions led some dystopian authors and critics to conflate the ideologies of these regimes with fascism, much as later proponents of the Horseshoe Theory would argue that the far left and far right have more in common with each other than with more centrist ideologies. C. S. Lewis, for instance, describes Orwell as “one who had been a revolutionary … and had later come to see that all

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11 Suvin likewise identifies the influence of Wells’s *The Time Machine* on Orwell (242).
totalitarian rulers, however their shirts may be coloured, are equally the enemies of Man” (“Orwell” 133). Claeys similarly conflates Stalinism with fascism and particularly Nazism in describing Big Brother as “a messianic Hitler- or Stalin-like figure” and suggesting that Nineteen Eighty-Four “satirized aspects of Hitler’s fascism and Stalin’s communism” (179-80). Claeys further argues that such communist regimes as that of Cambodia replicated ideas of purity common to fascist ideologies: “the only ‘real’ Khmer were the least educated peasants … Communist Man, like Millennial Man, was expected to be a pure type, and washing in blood was expected if no other cleanser was available.” Claeys thus surmises that the “‘other’—Jew, foreigner, heretic—has often had a difficult time in utopia” (186-87).

Although such later dystopias as Margaret Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale corroborate Claeys’s argument, such earlier dystopias as Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty-Four complicate his assessment. In Brave New World, for instance, Mustapha Mond’s “hooked nose [and] full red lips” reflect stereotypically Semitic features (39), but as John Savage later points out, “you [the Controllers] can get anything you want out of those bottles” in which human beings are produced artificially (200), suggesting that those in control of the World State in Brave New World find these features unexceptionable. Further, Huxley’s primary satirical target in Brave New World, Henry Ford, had sponsored the anti-Semitic Dearborn Independent newspaper and a compilation of its articles titled The International Jew (“Henry”). However, Mond’s description of an experimental four-hour workday in Ireland and its results in “a large increase in the consumption of soma” and civil unrest reinforces stereotypes of Irish violence and consumption of alcohol (202), and racial markers often identify members of lower castes, including black Delta-Minus hangar attendants (64), an “Epsilon-Plus negro porter” (101), an “octroo in Gamma-green uniform” serving as a guard for the reservation (104), and “Epsilon
Senegalese” foundry workers (159). Meanwhile, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, although Goldstein’s book acknowledges “deportation of whole populations” (204), Goldstein also states that “Jews, Negroes, [and] South Americans of pure Indian blood are to be found in the highest ranks of the Party” (208-09). That a character with the Irish surname of O’Brien represents the Inner Party and serves as the face of the Party in Winston’s interrogation in London suggests further that the Irish in Oceania may no longer be the subaltern population they were under English occupation or in Ulster for much of the twentieth century, and Keith Alldritt suggests that “the Catholic if not the Irish associations of [O’Brien’s] name … emphasize” the roles of “an inquisitor or … a priest” (156). However, that the counterrevolutionary bogeyman of Oceania has the name of Goldstein and “a lean Jewish face” suggests that vestiges of earlier prejudices may remain in Oceania (12). Nevertheless, although Pierce suggests that in *The Road to Wigan Pier* Orwell “turned on … the Communists for alienating intellectuals from socialism with their emphasis on ‘the idea of mechanical progress, not merely as a necessary development, but as an end in itself, almost as a kind of religion’” (Pierce 176), Orwell suggested that “Wells’s dream of the modern state had finally come true, in Nazi Germany” (qtd. in Pierce 176). Pierce notes that the term *fascism* is “as much abused … as communism” by the left and right, respectively, and defines fascism as “the ideology of the corporate state, in which government and business are intimate partners, and a mystical veneration for the organic unity of the state is usually personified in a charismatic leader” (169). Both Huxley’s World State and Orwell’s Oceania embody elements of Pierce’s definition of fascism, and Booker points out that “one of the least appreciated aspects of Orwell’s dystopian writings of the 1940s is the extent to which they are rooted in the numerous

12 However, Clark concludes that for all its dystopian elements, the racial stratification in *Brave New World* represents progress over Wells’s vision in that it “manages to find some uses for people that Wells despised” (114).
antifascist satires produced by British writers of the Left during the 1930s” (“English” 34).

Although the ownership of the means of production in the World State is unclear, the hypnopaedic indoctrination of consumption suggests an intimate partnership between government and business even if any disparity exists between the two (Brave 54-58). Similarly, in Oceania, according to Goldstein’s book, the government and the ownership of property are intimately connected:

The so-called “abolition of private property” … meant, in effect, the concentration of property in far fewer hands than before; but with this difference, that the new owners were a group instead of a mass of individuals …. Collectively, the Party owns everything in Oceania, because it controls everything and disposes of the products as it thinks fit … the whole process was represented as an act of collectivization. It had always been assumed that if the capitalist class were expropriated, Socialism must follow; and unquestionably the capitalists had been expropriated. (Nineteen Eighty-Four 206)

That such items as liquor, tobacco, and non-government buildings invariably have such proper names as Victory Mansions, Victory Gin, and Victory Cigarettes corroborates Goldstein’s argument, and Gottlieb emphasizes “the contrast between so many ‘Victories’ ([Winston] enters the slum-like Victory Mansions, swallows a slug of an atrocious Victory gin, and takes out a badly-made Victory cigarette) and the conspicuous economic failure of Oceania” (249).

Moreover, both the World State and Oceania invoke a charismatic leader as personification of the state. Mustapha Mond of the World State has a “deep resonant voice” and “eyes very piercing and dark” (Brave 39), and he speaks “straight … from the mouth of Ford himself” (40). At the outset of his conversation with John Savage, Mond shakes hands with the subjects of his inquisition and exhibits a “good-humoured intelligence” that disarms John and permits a frank exchange on the benefits and drawbacks of World State civilization (197). Big Brother similarly sports a “heavy black mustache and ruggedly handsome features” (Nineteen Eighty-Four 1), projecting the image of “an invincible, fearless protector … full of power and
mysterious calm” (15-16). Goldstein’s book, while noting that no one ever sees Big Brother in person or knows his whereabouts, describes Big Brother as purportedly “infallible and all-powerful …. We may be reasonably sure that he will never die …. Big Brother is the guise in which the Party chooses to exhibit itself to the world. His function is to act as a focusing point for love, fear, and reverence, emotions which are more easily felt toward an individual than toward an organization” (208-09). When Winston questions Big Brother’s existence, O’Brien describes Big Brother as “the embodiment of the Party,” arguing that Big Brother exists because the Party exists and dismissing the question of his physical existence as “of no importance” (259-60). O’Brien’s goal in interrogating Winston is that Winston love Big Brother rather than the Party (282). Nineteen Eighty-Four thus acts as an “anti-fascist parable,” according to Andy Duncan (212).

The response to dystopia as it appears in the works of Huxley, Orwell, and Zamyatin is a more complicated matter. Goldstein corroborates Winston’s earlier conclusion that the proles could pose a threat to the ruling hierarchy of the Ingsoc Party (Nineteen Eighty-Four 69); however, Winston also recognizes a paradox in the proles’ relationship to the Party: “Until they become conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious” (70). O’Brien, who claims to have contributed to writing Goldstein’s book, similarly describes the process as “secret accumulation of knowledge—a gradual spread of enlightenment—ultimately a proletarian rebellion—the overthrow of the Party,” though he dismisses the possibility of it ever occurring as “all nonsense” (261). However, while early twentieth-century reactionaries believed, as a 1916 editorial in The New Republic put it, that “[imbecility] breeds imbecility as certainly as white hens breed white chickens” (qtd. in Tucker), and they argued for a hereditary component of class and race distinctions, Goldstein follows
Morris in considering poverty and drudgery to be primary stupefying factors (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 201), and individual placement in the Party hierarchy is not hereditary, at least theoretically, giving the Party a veneer of progressivism and egalitarianism while it remains perpetually oligarchical (208-10), “rejects and vilifies every principle for which the Socialist movement originally stood,” and “preaches a contempt for the working class unexampled for centuries past” (216). This discrepancy between the Party’s ostensible socialist progressivism and its oligarchical disdain for the proletariat, according to Fromm, reflects “the betrayal of the socialist hopes by Stalin’s reactionary state capitalism,” and “the insanity of Stalinist terror during the thirties” (315), as well as “the falsification of socialism by Russian communism” (324). Accordingly, during the Two Minutes Hate Winston hears Goldstein “denouncing the dictatorship of the Party” and “crying hysterically that the Revolution had been betrayed” (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 12), although O’Brien later counters that the revolution had accomplished exactly what it had been intended to accomplish: “One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship” (263).14

13 In practice, the disparity in wealth between Inner Party, Outer Party, and proles suggests differences in resources and opportunities available to the children of each (140-41, 168-77, 191), which would perpetuate inequality given the ostensibly meritocratic placement examinations for Party entrance (208). Goldstein’s book notes that the society of Oceania is thus “very rigidly stratified, on what at first sight appear to be hereditary lines. There is far less to-and-fro movement between the different groups than happened under capitalism or even in the pre-industrial ages” (209). However, the “colonies for homeless children” and the Party’s plan to abolish familial ties outright would ameliorate this disparity (163, 267), approximating simultaneously the social conditions of Huxley’s World State and of Plato’s Republic.

14 However, Fromm cautions against identifying the abuses of Big Brother and the Party exclusively with those of Stalinism. Fromm identifies Orwell’s and Zamyatin’s respective dystopias with both Stalinism and Nazism (317). Fromm also critiques the military-industrial complex and “the popular idea that [the capitalist West] can save freedom and democracy by continuing the arms race and finding a ‘stable’ deterrent” (319), an idea that retains relevance in an era of Western anxiety over the nuclear programs of such nations as Iran and North Korea. Fromm cautions that “right and hatred of a possible aggressor will destroy the basic attitudes of a democratic, humanistic society” and that “the continued arms race … would lead to the destruction of any of those qualities of our society which can be called ‘democratic,’ ‘free,’ or ‘in the American tradition’” (320). Moreover, Fromm identifies in the Party’s assault on reality “a development which is taking place in the Western industrial countries” as well as in Stalinist and Maoist regimes, noting its prominence in the capitalist market system and in Western political alignment with non-communist dictatorships under the rhetoric of a “free world” (320-22). Fromm concludes that
Although the warfare of the early and mid-twentieth century ostensibly concerned fighting for peace and democracy, these conflicts contributed to increased skepticism of utopianism. Fromm notes that although some participants in these wars gave lip service to fighting on behalf of democracy and peace, largely at issue was “the territorial ambitions of the European powers” (315). These conflicts thus represented a continuation of the “despotic colonial regimes of the great European imperial powers,” which Claeys identifies as the “ill-documented prehistory of … totalitarianism,” noting that the concentration camps, mass executions and mutilations, imprisonment, and “denial of basic civil rights … imposed a vast dystopian experience on hundreds of millions of non-whites” (181). Although Orwell’s experiences with imperialism in Burma led to his socialism, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm* together constitute a “double-barreled shotgun at ‘Western imperialism’” (Whissen 10), Orwell includes this continuation of imperialism under nominally socialist states in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as well, as Oceania and its rival states compete perpetually for control of Africa, the Middle East, and India, along with their respective populations and resources (187, 215). In particular, Rob Beschizza notes that the ever-present Victory Gin is “always served with clove bitters, implying that Oceania’s boots are on the ground in Asia.” As a result, the effect of this continuous imperialist conflict on utopian thought was “in a relatively short time to destroy a two-thousand-year-old Western tradition of hope and to transform it into a mood of despair” (Fromm 315). Fromm identifies Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Huxley’s *Brave New World*, and Zamyatin’s *We* as literary exemplars of this new mood (316). Meanwhile, Pintér’s argument that *Brave New World* is “the most ambiguous dystopia of the century” in that it “is unique … in

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this danger is “inherent in the modern mode of production and organization, and relatively independent of the various ideologies” (325). Suvin likewise argues that Zamyatin examines in *We* “the repressive potentials of every strong state and technocratic setup, including the socialist ones” (256).
presenting a comprehensive fictional vision about a future World State that does not rest on the brutal oppression of its citizens by a powerful collectivist state” suggests an evolving cynicism toward utopia as the twentieth century progresses and such later authors as Orwell incorporated elements of Nazism and Stalinism into their dystopias (9, 146). Huxley, who wrote Brave New World Revisited at the time of “the Hungarian uprising and its repression” (Revisited 236), noted that Orwell’s work “was a magnified projection into the future of a present that had contained Stalinism and an immediate past that had witnessed the flowering of Nazism” (238). Criticism of utopias changed according to these developments: James argues that critics of utopia “usually assume that the author is producing a risibly impractical blueprint for a future society rather than (in most cases) a trenchant critique of contemporary institutions in fictional form … such criticism is made easier by associating utopianism with socialism and communism, and thus with the Soviet bloc” (220).

Although Winston reads extensively from Goldstein’s book, the sections he reads fail to lay out any motivation for the Party’s reactionary suppression of the proletariat. Goldstein argues that “in each variant of Socialism that appeared from about 1900 onwards the aim of establishing liberty and equality was more and more openly abandoned. The new movements … had the conscious aim of perpetuating unfreedom and inequality” (203). However, when Goldstein rhetorically asks “why … human equality [should] be averted” (216), Winston, distracted by Julia’s having fallen asleep, leaves off reading and does not resume before his arrest (217-24), leaving Goldstein’s rhetorical question unanswered. In his illicit diary Winston tells himself, “I understand HOW: I do not understand WHY” (80), and his reading of Goldstein fails to rectify this limitation. Winston reflects that Goldstein’s book “merely systematized the knowledge that he possessed already” rather than teaching him anything new (217), and O’Brien subsequently
corroborates Winston’s assessment (261). The limitations of Goldstein’s book reflect Orwell’s philosophy that “the ‘theory’ of intellectuals and a misplaced faith in abstract argument … is ultimately complicit with totalitarianism” (Waugh 69). However, Goldstein suggests that the nominally socialist revolutionaries of the twentieth century were “less avaricious, less tempted by luxury, [and] hungrier for pure power” (Nineteen Eighty-Four 205), and O’Brien later agrees with Goldstein that the Party is indifferent to wealth (263).

Goldstein’s distinction prefigures the discussion of such motivation in O’Brien’s interrogation of Winston. At O’Brien’s prompting, Winston attempts to work out for himself why the Party desires power. Winston considers that the Party may seek “the good of the majority,” that “men in the mass were frail, cowardly creatures who could not endure liberty or face the truth,” and his contrast between “freedom and happiness” (Nineteen Eighty-Four 262) recalls the debate between John Savage and Mustapha Mond in Huxley’s Brave New World. Squealer, a propagandist pig in Orwell’s Animal Farm, even employs such rhetoric, arguing that Napoleon “would be only too happy to let you make your decisions for yourselves. But sometimes you might make the wrong decisions, comrades, and then where should we be?” (Animal Farm 55). However, when Winston suggests that the Party is “ruling over us for our own good” and that “human beings are not fit to govern themselves,” O’Brien inflicts further torture on Winston and dismisses these justifications as “stupid,” arguing that Winston “should know better than to say” such things (262-63). O’Brien then describes the Party’s agenda as “power entirely for its own sake … only power, pure power” (263), arguing that “power is collective” (264). Moreover, O’Brien asserts, exerting power over another necessarily involves inflicting suffering; thus, the Party seeks to create “the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined … a world which will grow not less but more merciful
as it refines itself” (267), reducing rather than enhancing human longevity as it suits the Party’s agenda (269).

Utopian and Dystopian Continuity

Although the pessimism of Huxley’s and Orwell’s respective dystopias represents a fundamental shift in mood from the utopian optimism that preceded these dystopias and set the stage for an ongoing dystopian tradition, the dystopian trend of Huxley and Orwell follows many underlying dystopian elements from more seemingly optimistic works earlier in the utopian tradition, suggesting a foundational unity between the earlier utopias and the later dystopias. Ken MacLeod argues that science fiction is “well equipped to dramatize political philosophy, by thought experiments which take ideologies to uncompromisingly logical positions” and identifies Orwell in particular as an “exemplar” of this tendency in the dystopian genre. Although MacLeod argues that “Orwell’s interest in, and aptitude for, politics as a practical art were negligible,” MacLeod suggests also that Orwell’s “interest in, and imaginative grasp of, the implications of political philosophies were deep” (231). Garrett likewise notes that Orwell is “more purely political in his outlook than Huxley” (59). Suvin argues that both the utopias of the late nineteenth century and the dystopias of Orwell and other authors such as Stanley Kubrick are exercises in “reflecting on the author’s own historical period and the possibilities inherent in it,” as for instance Orwell’s criticisms of western leftists and the potential end results of postwar western socialism glorifying the Soviet paradigm:

Bellamy’s and Morris’s different socialist twenty-first centuries use the anticipation device so effectively because they are about incipient collective human relationships in the 1880s as they (differently) saw them, while 1984 or 2001 are about incipient collective human relationships in 1948 or 1967 as certain aspects of or elements within Orwell’s or Kubrick’s mind saw them. (76)
DeCoste notes in particular that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is set “in a London—with its bombed-out buildings, its ubiquitous government ministries, its rationing, and ceaseless news from the front—that mirrors the city that weathered the Second World War” and “might be seen as the quintessential expression of the British novel’s treatment of that war” (18). Thus, Suvin suggests, these texts are “always to be read as an analogy, somewhere between a vague symbol and a precisely aimed parable” (76). Gregory Paschalidis further argues that such “characteristically modernist utopias” as that of Wells share at their core a “tyrannical kernel” that serves as the subject for the works of Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell (43).

Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in particular codifies many of the most illiberal elements of the utopias of Thomas More and his successors, further suggesting an underlying continuity between the utopian and dystopian traditions. In Book I of *Utopia*, Raphael Hythloday describes the Polylerites as strenuously encouraging both slaves and free citizens to inform on each other (24). Likewise, in Utopia as well as in Oceania, “all watch each other closely for signs of disobedience” (James 220). Big Brother and the Party similarly encourage even children to inform on any suspicious activity among their parents: Winston’s neighbor Parsons arrives at the Ministry of Love after his own daughter denounces him to the Thought Police (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 24-25, 233). Hythloday also describes a hypothetical royal court in which one courtier advocates a fictitious war as a pretext for gathering income from subjects (More 30), much in the same way that Oceania’s perpetual warfare involves largely nonexistent warriors and battles and deliberately deprives its citizens of a decent standard of living (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 46-48, 191). Another such courtier proposes that the regime “work on the judges so that they will decide every case in favor of the king” so that “the clearest matter in the world will be obscured, and the truth itself called into question” (More 31), and Big Brother and the Party enact just such
principles in Oceania. The perceived infallibility of the Party renders it inconceivable to Parsons that the Party could wrongfully arrest him (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 233), and the Party famously takes aim even at simple arithmetic in its quest for reality control (249-51). Yet another of Hythloday’s courtiers suggests that “all property belongs to the king” and that “a man owns nothing but what the king, in his goodness, sees fit to leave him.” This courtier suggests even that the king “should in fact leave his subjects as little as possible, because his own safety depends on keeping them from growing insolent with wealth and freedom” (*More* 31). These suggestions anticipate the aforementioned danger of widespread wealth to oligarchy, and they prefigure Goldstein’s analysis of the nominal socialism of the Party. Goldstein notes that no individual Party member owns anything of significance beyond “petty personal belongings,” while the Party as a collective controls all property and means of production, with the ironic result that “economic inequality has been made permanent” (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 206); thus, in Oceania as in the early capitalism Hythloday decries, “justice cannot exist where all the best things in life are held by the worst people; nor can anyone be happy where property is limited to a few, since even those few are always uneasy, and the many are utterly wretched” (*More* 35). While Hythloday decries each suggestion of these hypothetical courtiers as “both dishonorable and ruinous to the king” (31), and his description of “squabbling … among beggars” anticipates the unruly behavior of the proles Winston witnesses fighting over tin saucepans (32; *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 70), Winston Smith romanticizes the proles of Oceania and holds them to be the best hope for the overthrow of the party.

Oceania similarly enacts the most illiberal elements of Utopian foreign policy from More’s *Utopia*. The Utopians engage in imperialistic colonization of neighboring territories (49), much as Oceania and its rival states perpetually fight over the resources and labor of those lands
outside the territory of the three major nation-states (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 187-88). The government of Utopia restricts its citizens’ travel, severely punishing unauthorized travelers (More 53); likewise, Winston’s travel both within London and to the countryside risks official scrutiny (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 83, 117). In Utopia, the doors of each building are open to all so that there is “nothing private anywhere” and no resident has any privacy, living “in the full view of all” (More 42, 53), a condition replicated in the “dystopian glass towers” of Zamyatin’s *We* (Clear 288); similarly, the telescreens in Oceania preclude any meaningful privacy, although at one point an architectural oddity in his flat allows Winston to write a diary unobserved (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 5-7, 36). Utopia offers “no chances for corruption, no hiding places, no spots for secret meetings” (More 53); likewise, Winston and Julia’s first illicit rendezvous entails a convoluted series of surreptitious conversations (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 113-19), and their love nest turns out to be a Thought Police trap (218-22). The illiberality of Utopia also influences the satire of Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, in which the animals explicitly aim to set up an ideal state for themselves, but the pigs establish a new regime ultimately indistinguishable from the human-led Manor Farm that preceded it. In particular, the Utopians’ characterization of an invalid as “unfit for any of life’s duties, a burden to himself and to others” (More 71), and their encouragement of euthanasia under such circumstances, forecasts the fate of Boxer, taken off to slaughter when unable to work further (*Animal Farm* 119-26). Thus, Garrett argues, “the totalitarian state” is “itself a perfectly logical development of either the Wellsian or Marxist type of Utopia” (59).

In short, although the dystopias or anti-utopias of Huxley, Orwell, and Zamyatin represent a fundamental shift in mood from the utopian visions of previous decades, they also share an underlying foundation of political thought and understanding of the human condition. These works essentially “damn” the “easy utopias” of earlier eras (Clareson 23), in which, as
Olaf Stapledon put it, authors “too easily imagine a progress toward some kind of Utopia, in which beings like themselves live in unmitigated bliss among circumstances perfectly suited to a fixed human nature” (qtd. in Clareson 19). From a perspective of genre, these dystopias continue the tradition of earlier utopias of mingling elements of Menippean satire and the novel and offering increasingly novelistic presentations of utopia or anti-utopia. Wells, for instance, had, “in search of excitement and novelty, diversified the narrative line and thickened his story with incident” (Garrett 61). In Huxley, the “savage visitor to Utopia” is “introduced late in the book” in favor of offering a broader satirical anatomy (58). In Orwell, Gottlieb notes that a major change from *Animal Farm* to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is that in the latter, “using a major character, Winston Smith, as a central human consciousness with whom we can readily identify, Orwell makes us sense, as if in our own skin, what it is like to be living in the worst of all possible worlds in Oceania. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* Orwell the visionary and Orwell the naturalist finally come together.” This synthesis results in “the complexity of Orwell’s genre, a composite he defines as ‘in a sense a fantasy, but in the form of the naturalistic novel’” (248). Orwell similarly casts *Animal Farm* as a fairy story (*Animal iii*), though Alldritt argues that as “the book does not tell of fairies, nor yet of the magical, this description seems hardly appropriate. Still it does suggest one intention of the book, which is to tell a story directly and simply” (148). Gottlieb suggests that in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* because of “the convincingly realistic detail, we are scarcely aware of Orwell’s mastery: by now the casually naturalistic description has imperceptibly turned into the scaffolding of the political allegory” (249). Moreover, “the novel’s composite genre demands not only that we identify with Winston’s tragic fate but that we examine it from the intellectual distance created by satire” (252). Similarly, Hume argues that both *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *We* “start as political idea-fantasies which shift to character-
fantasies.” Hume suggests that the psychological realism of the novel is useful to both Zamyatin and Orwell: “To drive their messages home, both authors want us to live through the breaking of a mind, so we experience and identify with the rebel-heroes in their rebellion, and then come to feel their total capitulation and love for the oppressive government” (161). Garrett likewise argues that Orwell, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, “approaches his subject as a novelist, not merely as a satirical fantasist. He tries to explore, more extensively and more realistically than Huxley did, the effects on the human feelings of living in a totalitarian state” (60). However, Alldritt argues that Orwell’s *Coming Up for Air* (1939) “marks his last venture with the novel,” identifying *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as “different species of the genus prose fiction, namely the fable and the utopia” (41), though these works render Orwell “more successful as a novelist than ever before” (120). Gottlieb suggests that critics of Orwell “have been confused by its composite genre; that is, by the unprecedented combination of political allegory and psychological realism. They have been largely split as to whether to read the novel as an exclusively naturalistic novel of depth psychology … or a work with exclusively political concerns” (249).

Although Orwell, Huxley, and Zamyatin present horrific visions of totalitarian anti-utopia that contrast vividly with the optimistic visions of earlier utopian authors such as Morris and Wells, these dystopian visions nonetheless strongly follow the satirical elements of More’s *Utopia* and reflect the most illiberal elements of More’s presentation of Utopia. While these dystopian authors, as secular socialists, reject the Augustinian Catholicism of More, the dystopian elements of their respective works corroborate More’s Augustinian pessimism toward human nature. Meanwhile, such authors among Orwell and Huxley’s contemporaries as C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and their fellow Inklings, following More’s Augustinian Christianity,
offer an alternative perspective on human nature and its effect on the possibility of utopia and anti-utopia that complements these dystopias.
Although the dystopian works of Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, and others remain the most canonical and thoroughly critically studied responses to the early modern utopias of such authors as H. G. Wells, William Morris, and Samuel Butler, other voices meanwhile emerged critiquing both early modernist utopianism and the dystopian visions of Huxley and Orwell. In particular, such authors as C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien offered alternative analyses of the possibilities and impediments to utopia and the contributing factors to dystopia. Although relatively few of the Inklings’ works function as strict utopias or anti-utopias according to the paradigm established by More and built upon by Butler, Morris, Wells, Huxley, and Orwell, the Inklings’ works of speculative fiction, literary criticism, and other literature retain the More’s Augustinian paradigm that later utopian and dystopian authors largely abandon. Thus, the fiction, literary criticism, correspondence, and other writings of Lewis, Tolkien, and the Inklings present a counterpoint to the line of utopian literature and literary criticism dominated by Morris, Wells, Huxley, and Orwell.

Lewis, Collectivism, and Oligarchy

While Morris and other utopian authors emphasized collectivism as a prerequisite for utopia, Lewis was profoundly skeptical of collectivism from his childhood. Lewis relates in his autobiographical *Surprised by Joy* an early childhood fear of insects and arachnids, noting that
these creatures’ “angular limbs, their jerky movements, their dry, metallic noises, all suggest either machines that have come to life or life degenerating into mechanism” (8). Both of these concepts feature prominently in the science fiction and dystopia of the early twentieth century: machines coming to life in Karel Čapek’s *R. U. R.* and life degenerating into technology in the hatcheries of Huxley’s *Brave New World*. Lewis writes also that in colonies of insects “we see fully realized [what] some of us most dread for our own species … the dominance of the collective” (8-9). This instinctive horror of collectivism would color Lewis’s responses to modern utopias, as socialism is the cornerstone of the utopias of Morris, Edward Bellamy, and others. Lewis later became increasingly skeptical of “those who derive all the ills of society from economics,” citing his experiences at Malvern College (Brown 78; cf. Duriez, *Bedeviled* 26). Malvern was highly oligarchical, with a “very small governing class of students in whom … ‘every kind of power, privilege, and prestige’ were officially united.” These students “exercised the power of command over the rest of the students, forcing them to do the group’s chores, run their errands, and fetch their tea,” and Lewis was “one of the school’s peasant class who was required to come running” (Brown 79). However, as Lewis points out, this disparity of power was not economically based:

> It was not (thank Heaven) the boys with threadbare coats who became Punts [unpopular students], nor the boys with plenty of pocket money who became Bloods [student aristocracy]. According to some theorists, therefore, it ought to have been entirely free from bourgeois vulgarities and iniquities. Yet I have never seen a community so competitive, so full of snobbery and flunkeyism, a ruling class so selfish and so class-conscious, or a proletariat so fawning, so lacking in all solidarity and sense of corporate honor. … If a ruling class has some other source of strength, why need it bother about money? (*Surprised* 110)

Although Malvern’s student hierarchy thus removes monetary capital from the equation of power, the sharp distinction between bourgeoisie and proletariat that socialists so often condemn
nonetheless remains, much as oligarchy survives the apparent end of capitalism in Huxley’s
*Brave New World* and Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Lewis here distinguishes oligarchy, the
rule of a few, from plutocracy, or the rule of the wealthy. Lewis’s argument thus counters that of
that disparity in wealth is essential to oligarchy and that “an all-round increase in wealth threatened the destruction—indeed, in some sense was the destruction—of a hierarchical society” (189):

> It was possible, no doubt, to imagine a society in which *wealth*, in the sense of personal possessions and luxuries, should be evenly distributed, while *power* remained in the hands of a small privileged caste. But in practice such a society could not long remain stable … In the long run, a hierarchical society was only possible on a basis of poverty and ignorance. (189-90)

Lewis, however, argued that the Bloods were unassailable as a ruling class despite the irrelevance of money at Malvern.1 These lessons profoundly shape Lewis’s interaction with
Marxist theory and its adherents, as is particularly evident in his response to J. B. S. Haldane’s criticism of Lewis’s Cosmic Trilogy:2

> I cannot share Professor Haldane’s exaltation at the banishment of Mammon from “a sixth of our planet’s surface.” I have already lived in a world from which Mammon was banished: it was the most wicked and miserable I have yet known. If Mammon were the only devil, it would be another matter. But where Mammon vacates the throne, how if Moloch takes his place? … When the state of society is such that money is the passport to all these prizes, then of course money will be the prime temptation. But when the passport changes, the desires will remain. And there are many other possible passports: position in an official hierarchy, for instance. (“Reply” 103)

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1. The Bloods of Malvern inspired Lewis’s later work on the concept of the Inner Ring, and Lewis describes the inner ring of the N.I.C.E. in *That Hideous Strength* as “what one had learned, at school, to call ‘bloods’” (124).

2. Haldane, like Lewis, was influenced significantly by Wells. Andrew M. Butler notes that Haldane’s *Daedalus; or, Science and the Future* (1924), argued for “the harnessing of biological processes for social ends” much as Wells earlier advocated for eugenics, including “artificial forms of reproduction in order to separate sexual pleasure from procreation” (519), anticipating the reproduction in *Brave New World* as well as that of the residents of the sterilized side of the moon in Lewis’s *That Hideous Strength* (271).
Malvern thus exemplified both the oligarchical and the collectivist elements of the Party in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, though Lewis ultimately fared better than Orwell’s Winston Smith, counting his release from Malvern in favor of private tutoring as “what I still reckon, by merely natural standards, the most fortunate thing that ever happened to me” (118, 128; Brown 81). Moreover, Lewis’s worldview places greater worth on the individual, who exists eternally, than on the state: “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendours” (“Weight” 15).

As a result, Lewis’s science fiction engages in skepticism toward collectivism and toward the science fiction paradigms of Wells and other authors. Lewis acknowledges Wells’s pioneering work in science fiction in a prefatory note to *Out of the Silent Planet*, writing that he “would be sorry if any reader supposed he was too stupid to have enjoyed Mr. H. G. Wells’s fantasies or too ungrateful to acknowledge his debt to them” (7). However, where Wells codified “the alien as inevitably malevolent and monstrous” (Pierce 93), Lewis inverts the more conventional science fiction trope of “alien enemies in space” representing “evil and grave danger for humanity,” such as that of the invading Martians of Wells’s *War of the Worlds*; instead, “evil resides on Earth, and our planet is therefore quarantined from the rest of the cosmos” (Duriez, *Bedeviled* 106). On a broader level, whereas Wells argues that “there could be no loyalties but to the evolutionary struggle of mankind against its own imperfections and the entropy of the universe” and that “other loyalties were obstacles to progress” (Pierce 103), Lewis defends “the very ‘out-of-date moral values’ Wells had so casually dismissed” in works such as *The Shape of Things to Come* (104). Wells’s Martians in *War of the Worlds* codify and epitomize
the trend in modern science fiction that “alien species usually accept science but are devoid of
moral standards,” being perfectly willing to exterminate Earth’s native life. Thus, in Wells and
other authors of science fiction, the “implication is that scientific thought is objective and
universal, but morality is not.” By contrast, authors such as Lewis, Tolkien, and George
MacDonald argue that “while a story may contain a different world or creatures, the morals must
remain the same as in our world, thus encouraging a moral response in the reader … there should
be ‘no Invention’ by the author in the moral aspects of the created world” (Sammons, “Better”
39). Meanwhile, Lewis’s belief in the transience of the state relative to the existence of human
“immortals” colors his stance on the individual and the collective in the Cosmic Trilogy: “Each
thing was made for [Maleldil]. He is the centre. Because we are with Him, each of us is at the
centre. It is not as in a city of the Darkened World where they say that each must live for all. In
His city all things are made for each” (Perelandra 185-86).

From 1914 to 1917, Lewis studied under William T. Kirkpatrick (Duriez, Bedeviled 26),
whom he and his family affectionately referred to as “Kirk,” “Knock,” or “the Great Knock”
(Surprised 133), Kirkpatrick having previously taught both Lewis’s father Albert and his brother
Warren (Brown 82). The events of World War I and Kirkpatrick’s teachings tempered Lewis’s
understanding of human nature. Lewis relates that Kirkpatrick responded to conversa
“fiendish” and “brutal” German atrocities by suggesting that fiends were “a figment of the
imagination” and that “none of the brutes does anything of the kind”; thus, these atrocities were
“simply Human” (Surprised 138). While Lewis came to disagree with Kirkpatrick on the
existence of the fiends and famously wrote on fiendish activity in The Screwtape Letters, this
skeptical view of human nature permeates Lewis’s writings. Lewis later concluded that war itself
“creates no absolutely new situation; it simply aggravates the permanent human situation so that
we can no longer ignore it” (“Learning” 44). Tolkien, another veteran of World War I who served as an air raid warden in World War II (Carpenter 193), similarly argued after the end of the war that war was itself “the permanent human situation,” as Lewis had put it: “The War is not over (and the one that is, or the part of it, has largely been lost). But it is of course wrong to fall into such a mood, for Wars are always lost, and The War always goes on; and it is no good growing faint” (qtd. in Carpenter 200).

Kirkpatrick’s intellectually rigorous teaching demanded epistemological depth of Lewis, and Kirkpatrick’s constant call for debate prepared Lewis to write well in the milieu of Menippean satire that calls for intellectual interplay, exemplified in the dialogue of many utopian and dystopian works: Thomas More’s dialogue between his fictionalized self and Raphael Hythloday in *Utopia*, William Guest’s questioning of his fellow travelers in Morris’s *News from Nowhere*, John Savage’s conversation with Mustapha Mond in Huxley’s *Brave New World*, and O’Brien’s interrogation of Winston Smith in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Lewis relates that Kirkpatrick would frequently interrupt when “a torrent of verbiage … was wasting time” or to offer “a correction or distinction merely parenthetical [that] betokened that, thus set right, your remark might still, without absurdity, be allowed to reach completion” before concluding with refutation that “always followed the same lines [:] Had I read this? Had I studied that? Had I any statistical evidence? Had I any evidence in my own experience?” (*Surprised* 136). This depth of debate underpins the dialogue between characters throughout the Cosmic Trilogy and Lewis’s other fiction, placing Lewis’s work squarely within the tradition of Menippean satire.

Lewis’s time at Oxford, where he earned First Class degrees in classical studies, philosophy and ancient history, and English literature (Brown 106-08), likewise informed his later satire and critique of humanity in the Cosmic Trilogy. Lewis describes meeting an apostate
Irish parson obsessed with “human survival,” juxtaposing “ravenous desire for personal immortality” with “total indifference to all that could, on a sane view, make immortality desirable … [all] he wanted was the assurance that something he could call ‘himself’ would, on almost any terms, last longer than his bodily life” (*Surprised* 202). This desire for immortality becomes the subject of critique at the individual level in *That Hideous Strength* with the experiment on Alcasan’s head and at the species level in the denouement to *Out of the Silent Planet.* Tolkien shared this attitude toward immortality, writing it into his Middle Earth narratives: “Longevity or counterfeit ‘immortality’ (true immortality is beyond Eä [the physical world]) is the chief bait of Sauron—it leads the small to a Gollum, and the great to a Ringwraith” (*Letters* 286).

Oxford also represented Lewis’s first meeting with future Inkling Owen Barfield (Brown 172), who challenged what Lewis later described as “chronological snobbery” and the tendency to employ “the names of earlier periods as terms of abuse” (*Surprised* 206). This chronological snobbery, according to Lewis, involves “the uncritical acceptance of the intellectual climate common to our own age and the assumption that whatever has gone out of date is on that account discredited” (207). While the modern tendency is to conclude that discarded concepts “simply had been left behind by progress” (Duriez, *Bedeviled* 23), as for instance in Nietzsche’s verdict that “[what] is now decisive against Christianity is our taste, no longer our reasons” (186), Lewis argues instead that anyone considering an apparently discredited idea “must find out why it went out of date. Was it ever refuted (and if so by whom, where, and how conclusively) or did it

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3 Atwood similarly addresses this desire for immortality in *The Handmaid’s Tale* when Offred illicitly reads a women’s magazine in the Commander’s office: “What was in them was promise. They dealt in transformations; they suggested an endless series of possibilities …. They suggested one adventure after another, one wardrobe after another, one improvement after another, one man after another. They suggested rejuvenation, pain overcome and transcended, endless love. The real promise in them was immortality” (201).
merely die away as fashions do? If the latter, this tells us nothing about its truth or falsehood” (Surprised 207-08). Lewis notes also the corollary that “our own age is also ‘a period,’ and certainly has, like all periods, its own characteristic illusions. They are likeliest to lurk in those widespread assumptions which are so ingrained in the age that no one dares to attack or feels it necessary to defend them” (208). This shift in perspective enabled Lewis to adapt and incorporate medieval cosmology and literature, which he had written about academically in The Allegory of Love (1936) and in his posthumously published The Discarded Image (1964), into his Cosmic Trilogy (Duriez, Bedeviled 105; Hume 116-17). In much the same way, his fellow medievalist and Inkling Tolkien incorporated both flat- and round-earth cosmology into his Middle-earth fiction (Letters 197). As a result, critics such as Kathryn Hume have cast Perelandra in particular as one of the “modern descendants” of the “medieval and renaissance romances,” comparing it to Spenser’s The Faerie Queene (153). Barfield challenged also Lewis’s belief in “the universe revealed by the senses” as “rock-bottom reality,” suggesting that “one would have to go much further—as many have since gone—and adopt a Behavioristic theory of logic, ethics, and aesthetics” (Surprised 208). Lewis rejected this behaviorism, which permeates the societies of Huxley’s World State and Orwell’s Oceania as well as underlying the conditioning of Alex in Anthony Burgess’s later A Clockwork Orange: “the act of believing what the behaviorist believes is one that my mind simply will not perform” (209). Further, materialism failed to address the issue of epistemology: “if our thoughts are merely the product of random accidents, then there is no reason to trust them” (Brown 122). Because of these influences, Lewis “never indulged in the fashionable literary spirit of disillusionment after World War I,” as there had been “no fundamental mismatch between his beliefs and the horrors of his wartime experience” (Duriez, Bedeviled 34).
Lewis’s experiences in war and at university thoroughly color his response to utopia, both as presented in political and in literary forms. During a 1940 visit from his physician and fellow Inkling R. E. “Humphrey” Havard, whom Lewis later wrote into *Perelandra* briefly along with a fictionalized version of himself (20-28; Carpenter 149), Lewis listened on the radio to a Hitler speech, with an English translation from the BBC (Duriez, *Bedeviled* 21). Hitler claimed utopian motives in pursuing conquest of Europe and war against England: “It never has been my intention to wage war, but rather to build up a State with a new social order and the finest possible standard of culture” (qtd. in Duriez, *Bedeviled* 22). Although Lewis credited Hitler as a charismatic speaker aside from the Führer’s obvious lies, he saw in the dictator a satanic degree of hubris and narcissism, and in Hitler’s aims for Europe a microcosm of Satan’s “designs to exert his will systematically over all parts of human life, his ultimate aim being dehumanization—the ‘abolition of man,’ as Lewis later called it” (Duriez, *Bedeviled* 22-23).

Thus, in *Screwtape Letters* hell “echoes the bureaucracy and efficiency of Hitler’s fascist Reich and that incipient tendency … in all modern states—states that belong to the current ‘Age of the Machine’” (Duriez, *Bedeviled* 43), while in Lewis’s later “Screwtape Proposes a Toast” education and democracy are the devils’ targets (Duriez, *Bedeviled* 49-50).

Tolkien’s education and wartime experience had much in common with that of Lewis. Like Lewis, Tolkien studied William Morris, a fellow Exeter alumnus, particularly Morris’s *Völsungsaga* and *The House of the Wolfings*, finding that “Morris’s view of literature coincided with his own” (69-70), and he later compared his own TCBS reading group to Morris’s Pre-Raphaelites (Garth 14), though he critiqued the “philological knowingness” and “antiquarian

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4 The TCBS, or Tea Club and Barrovian Society, derived its name from its meetings in the library office at King Edward’s, at which the group “brewed clandestine teas on a spirit-stove,” and at the tea-room of Barrow’s Stores; Tolkien maintained his affiliation with the group after his Oxford matriculation (Garth 5-6).
sentiment” of Morris’s Old English translations (“On Translating” 56). Humphrey Carpenter argues in particular that the “style of [Tolkien’s 1917] ‘The Fall of Gondolin’ suggests that Tolkien was influenced by . . . Morris” in one of the earliest Middle Earth narratives (92). Tolkien experienced “bitter disillusionment” in World War I and the “animal horror of trench warfare” (83-84), though one of his Catholic professors had advised him that war was “merely ‘back to normal’” for humanity (Garth 48). Although Carpenter suggests that “[no] account of the external events of Tolkien’s life can provide more than a superficial explanation of the origins of his mythology” (90), Tolkien’s later fiction reflects these wartime experiences: Tolkien wrote later that “‘Sam Gamgee’ is indeed a reflexion of the English soldier, of the privates and batmen I knew in the 1914 war, and recognised as so far superior to myself” (81). John Garth argues that Tolkien’s war experiences inform “The Fall of Gondolin” and, in turn, much of the rest of Tolkien’s legendarium, casting “The Fall of Gondolin” as “the dark and complex story of an ancient civilization under siege by nightmare attackers, half-machine and half-monster” (38); Tolkien later wrote to Christopher that these experiences “generated Morgoth” (qtd. in Garth 38-39). Carpenter likewise notes that “the device that linked the stories” of Tolkien’s legendarium “owes something to William Morris’s *The Earthly Paradise*” and that *The Silmarillion* in particular “is the work of a profoundly religious man. It does not contradict Christianity but complements it . . . God is indeed there, more explicitly in *The Silmarillion* than in the work that grew out of it, *The Lord of the Rings*” (90-91). Tolkien joined the Oxford faculty in 1925 (Carpenter 108), founding the Kolbitar (an Icelandic title referring to “Coal-biters,” or “those who lounge so close to the fire in winter that they ‘bite the coal’”) reading club for Icelandic sagas (119-20), meeting Lewis on the latter’s arrival at Magdalen College in 1926, and recruiting Lewis into the Kolbitar the following year (143-44). After the Kolbitar group finished “all the
principal Icelandic sagas and finally the Elder Edda” and consequently ceased meeting, the
Inklings literary society emerged as a successor group of “the circle of friends who gathered at
regular intervals around Lewis,” including Lewis and Tolkien as well as Warren Lewis, Barfield,
Havard, Hugo Dyson, and Charles Williams, among others (149-50; Lindop 308). The Inklings
were never “a formal group, but simply a gathering of Lewis’s friends held together by mutual
liking and shared interests, literary and theological … aware of themselves as ‘a sort of informal
club’ …. They met twice a week in Lewis’s college rooms, to read from their recent work … and
to discuss literature, ideas, everything under the sun and beyond it” as well as at the Eagle and
Child pub in Oxford (Lindop 307-08, 359-60).

Both Lewis and Tolkien conceived of the satanic plot as heavily involving machinery and
applied science. Tolkien believed that “myths may be misguided, but they steer however shakily
towards the true harbour, while materialistic ‘progress’ leads only to a yawning abyss and the
Iron Crown of the power of evil” (Carpenter 147). Lewis invokes the concept of mechanical
devilry in the activities of the National Institute for Coordinated Experiments, or N.I.C.E., in
*That Hideous Strength*, while Tolkien described Sauron’s ring from *The Lord of the Rings* as
“essentially a machine made to objectify his power” (Duriez, Bedeviled 39). Writing to his son
Christopher, Tolkien described the Second World War as “the first War of the Machines” for the
Allies as well as the Axis (*Letters* 111), casting the conflict in terms of the fiction he was then in
the process of writing:\footnote{Although Tolkien did not publish *The Lord of the Rings* until 1954-55, Tolkien had been at work on it since 1936 (*Letters* 160), and in this same letter he casts Christopher on the front as “a hobbit among the Urukhai” and describes his work on what would become *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King* (78-79). Meanwhile, Lewis’s correspondence with Warren indicates that Tolkien had read an excerpt from “the new Hobbit book” to the Inklings during a November 1939 meeting (Duriez, Bedeviled 57-61; Brown 174). Tolkien wrote that *Lord of the Rings* was indirectly the result of an agreement with Lewis in 1936 that, based on the outcome of a coin toss, Lewis would write a story about space travel and Tolkien a story about time (*Letters* 347). Lewis, meanwhile, fulfilled his end of the agreement in writing his Cosmic Trilogy, which he likewise read to the Inklings. Tolkien enjoyed the first}
seems) succeed. But the penalty is, as you will know, to breed new Saurons, and slowly turn Men and Elves into Orcs” (78). Sauron and Saruman “experiment with genetic engineering and use or encourage the use of machines in order to enslave free peoples” (Duriez, *Bedeviled* 79), and Sauron in particular is “the supreme technocrat: the Ring itself is a product of his technological skill, in which he stores part of himself” (80). The Orcs, for their part, represent a behavioristic corruption of humanity: “programmed to inflict evil, acting as tools rather than free agents of … Sauron, existing rather like intelligent biological robots” (75). Meanwhile, the N.I.C.E. of *That Hideous Strength* envisions humanity subjected to similar manipulation (86). This conceit was not limited to the Inklings: Churchill warned Britain and its allies that “if we fail, then the whole world, … including all we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science” (qtd. in Duriez, *Bedeviled* 58). This “perverted science” and mechanistic dehumanization also figures prominently in the mass production and indoctrination of human beings in Huxley’s *Brave New World*, as well as in the totalitarian “oligarchical collectivism” and destruction of Winston Smith’s humanity in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Thus, despite their disparate worldviews, Lewis and Tolkien shared with Huxley and Orwell anxieties over the potential dehumanization of humanity.

Lewis’s skepticism toward utopianism was common to the Inklings and their associates, particularly Tolkien. While Stephen R. L. Clark suggests that “Tolkien’s hobbits appear to live in a distributist economy, keeping the ‘laws of free will, because they were The Rules (as they said), both ancient and just’” (75; *The Lord of the Rings* 9), Tolkien, in his correspondence to

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two volumes, lobbying for *Silent Planet*’s publication in 1938, but he found *That Hideous Strength* to be inferior and “spoiled by the influence of Charles Williams’s Arthurian-Byzantine mythology” (Carpenter 170n1).
Naomi Mitchison, argues that his hobbits and their Shire are “not a Utopian vision, or recommended as an ideal in their own or any age,” and he describes reform “by exercise of power” as “doomed to Sarumanism,” alluding to the fallen wizard Saruman’s technocracy, alliance with Sauron, and despoiling of the Shire (Letters 197). Tolkien wrote also that the chief temptation of Saruman, Gandalf, and the other wizards to “fall” or sin “would be impatience, leading to the desire to force others to their own good ends, and so inevitably at last to mere desire to make their own wills effective by any means” (237). Moreover, in a letter to Milton Waldman, Tolkien describes Sauron as having been a utopian reformer: “Very slowly, beginning with fair motives: the reorganizing and rehabilitation of the ruin of Middle-earth, ‘neglected by the gods’ … he becomes a reincarnation of Evil, and a thing lusting for Complete Power” (151). Tolkien suggests that at first Sauron “was not indeed wholly evil, not unless all ‘reformers’ who want to hurry up with ‘reconstruction’ and ‘reorganization’ are wholly evil, even before pride and the lust to exert their will eat them up” (190). Rather, Sauron “had gone the way of all tyrants: beginning well, at least on the level that while desiring to order all things according to his own wisdom he still at first considered the (economic) well-being of other inhabitants of the Earth” (243). Even in his fallen state, Sauron “still had the relics of positive purposes, that descended from the good of the nature in which he began: it had been his virtue (and therefore also the cause of his fall, and of his relapse) that he loved order and coordination, and disliked all confusion and wasteful friction” (Morgoth’s 396). In this respect, Sauron follows the lead of Melkor, the fallen Vala, who in the Ainulindalë or origin of the world “feigned, even to himself at first, that he desired to go [into the created world] and order all things for the good of the

6 Tolkien’s Middle-earth legendarium is thus far less black and white than it appears to critics such as Clark, who suggests that “The Lord of the Rings would have had more success among the literati if Saruman at least could have been right, or if the heroism of Aragorn were more questionable” (175-76).
Children of Ilúvatar [elves and humans], controlling the turmoils … But he desired rather to subdue to his will both Elves and Men … and he wished himself to have subjects and servants, and to be called Lord, and to be a master over other wills” (Silmarillion 18). This desire colors Sauron’s understanding of his opposition, as he imagines Gandalf and the other Istari or wizards as “emissaries from the Valar, seeking to establish their lost power again and ‘colonize’ Middle-earth, as a mere effort of defeated imperialists” and Manwë, leader of the Valar, as having “motives … precisely the same as his own” (Morgoth’s 397). By contrast, Manwë “has no thought for his own honour, and is not jealous of his power, but rules all to peace” (Silmarillion 40). Similarly, for Aulë, another Vala, “the delight and pride … was in the deed of making, and in the thing made, and not in possession nor in himself, wherefore he became a maker and teacher, and none have called him lord” (Morgoth’s 13). These Valar recognize that “if ever in their dealings with Elves and Men the Ainur have endeavoured to force them when they would not be guided, seldom has this turned to good, howsoever good the intent” (Silmarillion 41).

Tolkien’s attitudes toward power represent the foundation of his political views. In particular, Tolkien wrote that he was “not a ‘socialist’ in any sense—being averse to ‘planning’ (as must be plain) most of all because the ‘planners,’ when they acquire power, become so bad” (235). At the time of the Munich agreement, Tolkien had “a loathing of being on any side that includes Russia” and suspected “that Russia is probably ultimately far more responsible for the present crisis and choice of moment than Hitler” (qtd. in Carpenter 189). During the Second World War, in letters to his son Christopher, Tolkien referred to “Socialism in either of its factions now at war” as instances of “those who have … finally bowed heart and will to the world or the evil spirit” (Letters 110), minimizing the distinctions between Stalinism and National Socialism, and he referred to Stalin especially as “that bloodthirsty old murderer” (65),
while he considered Hitler a “ruddy little ignoramus” responsible for “ruining, perverting, misapplying, and making [forever] accursed, that noble northern spirit, a supreme contribution to Europe, which I have ever loved, and tried to present in its true light” (qtd. in Carpenter 193-94).

Tolkien wrote of his political leanings at length in a letter to Christopher:

My political opinions lean more and more to Anarchy (philosophically understood, meaning abolition of control [,] not whiskered men with bombs) …. Government is an abstract noun meaning the art and process of governing and it should be an offence to write it with a capital G or so as to refer to people … the most improper job of any man, even saints (who at any rate were at least unwilling to take it on), is bossing other men. Not one in a million is fit for it, and least of all those who seek the opportunity …. The mediævals were only too right in taking nolo episcopari as the best reason a man could give to others for making him a bishop. (63-64)

The Shire of The Lord of the Rings reflects Tolkien’s anarchist leanings, having “hardly any ‘government’” and leaving families mostly to their own devices. This arrangement works effectively due to the hobbits’ generosity, contentment, and moderation, though the hobbits idiomatically “said of wild folk and wicked things (such as trolls) that they had not heard of the king” (9); Shippey notes that “a postal service is one of the few public functions exercised by the hobbits’ minimal government” along with a few law enforcement officers (Tolkien 60).

Tolkien’s invocation of nolo episcopari, Latin for “I do not wish to be made a bishop,” echoes the principle of his fellow Catholic Thomas More, who in Utopia notes that seeking public office in the eponymous island nation disqualifies an aspirant from holding any such office (74).

The principle of nolo episcopari, or of reluctance to assume power, permeates the work of the Inklings, along with the related principle that leadership entails service to the people and abrogation of the leader’s individual liberties and preferences. In Lewis’s Narnia volume Prince Caspian, for instance, when Caspian expresses reluctance to assume the throne and admits feelings of insufficiency, Aslan replies, “Good …. If you had felt yourself sufficient, it would
have been a proof that you were not” (411). In *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, when Caspian announces his intention to sail to the edge of the world, his subjects unanimously object, along with Edmund and Lucy. As Reepicheep in particular tells Caspian, “You break faith with all your subjects … if you do not return. You shall not please yourself with adventures as if you were a private person. And if your Majesty will not hear reason it will be the truest loyalty of every man on board to follow me in disarming and binding you till you come to your senses.”

When Caspian objects, Lewis’s narrator interjects that Caspian looks “for a moment not unlike his uncle Miraz,” the usurping tyrant and antagonist of *Prince Caspian* (537), and Caspian immediately thereafter experiences a vision of Aslan that ratifies the objections of Reepicheep and the others (538). Similarly, in *The Horse and His Boy*, neither Shasta/Cor nor his brother Corin wishes to become king of Archenland, but Lune insists that he and they are bound by the law, “for it’s the law makes … a king,” and that Cor has no choice but to become king, emphasizing the responsibilities and hardships of rule (309-10). By contrast, the antagonists of Narnia frequently style themselves as absolute rulers. Andrew claims in *The Magician’s Nephew* that “rules … can’t possibly be expected to apply to profound students and great thinkers and sages” and that “[men] like me, who possess hidden wisdom, are freed from common rules just as we are cut off from common pleasures” (19), much like the Samurai of Wells. Similarly, Queen Jadis considers her former subjects utterly expendable and her use of the genocidal Deplorable Word unexceptionable: “What else were they there for but do do my will? … You must learn … that what would be wrong for you or for any of the common people is not wrong in a great Queen such as I” (42). Rilian, under the enchantment of the Green Witch, expects to be a king who rules by conquest and whose word is law, though with the enchantment broken he rejects this plan (*Silver* 622, 629). Similarly, in Tolkien’s *Unfinished Tales* narrative “Aldarion
and Erendis,” Meneldur, the king of Númenor, condemns the excessive seafaring of his son Aldarion, cautioning him not to “become enamoured of the Great Lands [Middle-earth], you who one day must be King and Father of this Isle” (183). Despite the profit of Aldarion’s voyages, Meneldur insists, “This is the part of merchants and explorers, not of the King’s Heir. What need have we of more silver and gold, unless to use in pride where other things would serve as well? The need of the King’s house is for a man who knows and loves this land and people, which he will rule” (186).7

Meanwhile, Dorothy L. Sayers, a friend of Lewis and of his friend and fellow Inkling Charles Williams,8 reimagined the Faustian myth along similar ideological lines in her drama The Devil to Pay (1939). While Goethe’s famous iteration of the Faust legend had cautioned against excessive pursuit of knowledge as its own end, Sayers argued that this pursuit “is not our besetting sin”; rather, Sayers focuses on “the impulsive reformer, over-sensitive to suffering, impatient of the facts, eager to set the world right by sudden overthrow.” These reformers, according to Sayers, are “very common in these times,” with authoritarian regimes in power in Germany, Italy, Spain, and the Soviet Union (Duriez, Bedeviled 103).

Utopia among the Inklings

Lewis’s critical response in his English Literature in the Sixteenth Century to Utopia describes More’s work as “a book whose real place is not in the history of political thought so

7 Meneldur’s lack of interest in accumulating silver and gold reflects not only the ironic use of gold in More’s Utopia but also the injunction in the Torah that a king not “acquire for himself excessive silver and gold” (Deuteronomy 17.17 ESV).

8 Sayers herself was not technically one of the Inklings, as the group was “an informal all-male club, typical in respects of its time” (Duriez, Bedeviled 101; Carpenter 149-53), following the paradigm of all-male company at Oxford (Carpenter 54). However, such Inklings scholars as Colin Duriez argue that “it is difficult to ignore her work when considering the ‘life-force’ of the Inklings” due to her influence on Lewis (Bedeviled 17, 92).
much as in that of fiction and satire,” and Lewis cautions modern readers against taking *Utopia* too seriously as a blueprint for revolution (167). Lewis argues that in *Utopia* “invention … is quite as important as the merits of the polity described … on very different levels of seriousness. Not to recognize this is to do More grave injustice” (169). Lewis contends that the narrative structure of Book I in particular “has no place in the history of political philosophy” (170).

Lewis’s caution against a reading of *Utopia* as political manual particularly concerns the abolition of private property in Utopia, which served as a model for the socialist utopias of Morris and Bellamy and for which More earned commemoration at the Kremlin after the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.9 Although Lewis does not explicitly mention Marxism in his analysis of *Utopia*, Communist revolutions in particular were at the forefront of the geopolitical milieu in which Lewis published *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* in 1954, and Lewis suggests that “[the] process which, if not checked, will abolish Man, goes on apace among Communists and Democrats no less than among Fascists” (*Abolition* 50-51). Elsewhere in his writings Lewis suggests that he disagrees with “most communists” as possessing an “ethic which worships success” and notes that in his experience such communists “tend, when all else fails, to tell me that I ought to forward the revolution because ‘it is bound to come’” (“Reply” 97). Lewis particularly castigates the Communist state as a diabolical invention, arguing that the bourgeoisie can and often did give up power and wealth as a result of social pressures and their own consciences without the necessity of any proletarian revolution, and Lewis particularly opposes

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9 However, Károly Pintér argues that Marxist readings of More such as the 1887 monograph of German Marxist Karl Kautsky enact “distortive interpretation.” According to Pintér, Kautsky “starts from the—never satisfactorily justified—axiom that More was a Socialist/Communist … and reviews all other aspects of More’s life and career from this angle … he carefully selects only those sources and references that support his points, uses lengthy quotations from *Utopia* as though they self-evidently reflected More’s own opinion on various matters, and … he does not shrink from inventing false facts to prove his thesis” (51-52).
the Marxist tenets of punitive taxation and compulsory state education (*Screwtape* 195-96, 205). Although such Marxist detractors as Haldane condemned Lewis as “‘a most useful prop to the existing social order’ … dear to those who ‘stand to lose by social changes’” (“Reply” 98), Lewis himself, as a member of the petit bourgeoisie, lived out his argument on bourgeois generosity, donating two thirds of his royalties from *The Screwtape Letters* to the needy via a charitable trust with Barfield’s assistance (Brown 188). Meanwhile, Lewis relates, his Marxist critics instead tended to appeal to force: “One dissuaded me from my own position on the shockingly irrelevant ground that if I continued to hold it I should, in good time, be ‘mown down’—argued, as a cancer might argue if it could talk, that he must be right because he could kill me” (“Reply” 97). Similarly, Lewis praises Orwell’s satire of Marxist revolution in *Animal Farm* as “excellent” despite the profound ideological differences between Orwell’s secularism and socialism and Lewis’s Christianity and rejection of collectivism (*Four* 94). Although Lewis acknowledges that such revolutionary movements may begin from high ideals, he nonetheless insists that these ideals must be kept in balance, and that the modern era had become “an increasingly cruel age” paradoxically “in the attempt to reduce all virtues to kindness”: “Every vice leads to cruelty. Even a good emotion, pity, if not controlled by charity and justice, leads through anger into cruelty … pity for the oppressed classes, when separated from the moral law as a whole, leads by a very natural process to the unremitting brutalities of a reign of terror” (*Problem* 59). Lewis thus identifies human corruption rather than scarcity in nature as impediments to a just society: “It is men … who have produced racks, whips, prisons, slavery, guns, bayonets, and bombs; it is by human avarice or human stupidity, not by the churlishness of nature, that we have poverty and overwork” (86). While Lewis endorsed a “wholesome … reawakening of the social conscience” in which members of society “feel ourselves to be
involved in an iniquitous social system and to share a corporate guilt” (54), he suggested that “a
consistent practice of virtue by the human race even for ten years would fill the earth from pole
to pole with peace, plenty, health, merriment, and heartsease, and that nothing else will” (57-58).

Meanwhile, More’s *Utopia* and Lewis’s response to it significantly influenced Lewis’s
Cosmic Trilogy, in which the societies of Malacandra and Perelandra exhibit markedly utopian
characteristics and in which the antagonists take England to the edge of dystopia. The
motivations of the antagonists in Lewis’s *Out of the Silent Planet* in particular reflect More’s
Augustinian invocation of the role of pride in perpetuating evil within western society, following
Lewis’s arguments that collectivist Marxism is an inadequate response to this evil and his
skepticism toward taking *Utopia* at face value as a political tract. In *Utopia*, Raphael Hythloday
argues that “as long as you have private property, and as long as money is the measure of all
things, it is scarcely ever possible for a commonwealth to be just or happy … there can be no fair
or just distribution of goods, nor can the business of mortals be happily conducted” (35-36).
Accordingly, Hythloday describes Utopia as having “nothing private anywhere” and relegating
domestic use of gold and silver to making chamber pots, chains to bind slaves, and ornaments to
disgrace criminals (42, 55). However, elsewhere Hythloday allows for private property, or at
least advocates caution in making the state the agent of redistribution, in noting that among the
“not badly governed” Polylerites, “whoever is found guilty of theft must make restitution to the
owner, not (as elsewhere) to the prince; they think that the prince has no more right to the stolen
goods than the thief” (23). Ultimately, More offers another explanation of the impediment to
justice: “one single monster, the prime plague and begetter of others … Pride.” According to
More, pride “measures her advantage not by what she has but by what others lack” (96);
therefore, pride underlies many evils that at first glance may be attributed to private property,
hence the anxieties of oligarchical elements over a widespread increase in wealth and standards of living.

Of the two antagonists in *Silent Planet*, a physicist named Weston epitomizes pride, and his accomplice Devine epitomizes greed, and these characters and their fates address the tension between greed and pride as culprits for social ills. The motivations of Devine in undertaking the voyages to Malacandra are strictly financial, and Ransom observes that Devine’s conversation “ran on the things he would do when he got back to Earth: ocean-going yachts, the most expensive women and a big place on the Riviera figured largely in his plans” (32-33). Ransom later learns that gold is plentiful on Malacandra and that Devine and Weston had already made one voyage there to collect gold (70, 120-21). For Weston, however, space travel represents the ability of humanity to “jump off the speck of matter on which our species began; infinity, and therefore perhaps eternity, is being put into the hands of the human race”; with a notably collectivist attitude, he dismisses any counterargument that “the rights or the life of an individual or of a million individuals are of the slightest importance in comparison” (29).10

The responses of Malacandra’s natives to Devine’s greed and Weston’s hubris demonstrate the significance of these attitudes as impediments or threats to a utopia. These responses are particularly evident in the climax of *Silent Planet* when Weston and Devine answer for their presence and actions on Malacandra before Oyarsa, the ruler of Malacandra, at the planet’s capital city of Meldilorn. Just as in Utopia gems are considered a plaything for infants (More 56-57), in Malacandra the humans’ lust for gold leads the natives to “treat them like cubs”

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10 Haldane envisions a similar future of space colonization in “The Last Judgment” (1927), in which the future history of Earth is “narrated to a hypothetical audience of Venesian children 40 million years in the future” (Andrew Butler 519).
(Silent 121) and to laugh at the humans’ attempt to bribe them with jewelry (126-28). Oyarsa dismisses Devine as “only a talking animal” and concludes that the rational being within him is “already dead” (138), notably even using the pronoun it to refer to Devine (Hilder 30). Weston, however, represents a graver threat to Malacandra in that he seeks to eliminate its native population and claim the planet for humanity (Silent 133), so that humans can outlive Earth and travel from planet to planet and from star to star as each world becomes uninhabitable (135-36). Weston views even his own life as insignificant in this context, assuming that he will be killed but refusing to abandon his goal (133-36). Weston here epitomizes “the belief that the supreme moral end is the perpetuation of our own species, and that this is to be pursued even if, in the process of being fitted for survival, our species has to be stripped of all those things for which we value it—of pity, of happiness, and of freedom” (“Reply” 100). As such, Weston and his fellow “idealists” represent a far graver threat than the avarice of people like Devine to Malacandra—and, in That Hideous Strength, also to Earth (Shippey, “Ransom” 241). In Malacandra, however, all rational natives accept that “a world is not made to last [forever], much less a race” and that all worlds will eventually die: Malacandra in particular is nearing the end of its lifespan (Silent 100, 138). In resisting this wisdom, Weston therefore selflessly risks his life on behalf of a collective hubris of humanity that refuses to accept any limits on its territory or longevity. In Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four, O’Brien exhibits similar hubris on behalf of the Party: “We are the priests of power … if [a human being] can escape from his identity, if he can merge himself in the Party so that he is the Party, then he is all-powerful and immortal … our control over matter is absolute … There is nothing that we could not do … We make the laws of nature”

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11 Devine thus exists much as the Orcs as Tolkien describes them in Morgoth’s Ring: “It must be assumed that ‘talking’ is not necessarily the sign of the possession of a ‘rational soul’ or fëa …. [The Orcs’] ‘talking’ was really reeling off ‘records’ set in them by Melkor” (410).
The natives of Malacandra, by contrast, reject both individual and collective hubris and have “left behind … fear, murder and rebellion” in favor of peace, no longer fearing death even on an individual level (Silent 138-39, 76-77). The society of Malacandra thus acts as a satirical foil to the attitudes underlying Weston and Devine as they permeate modern society, critiquing such subjects as the influence of pride and anxiety over mortality on modern culture in much the same way other utopias and dystopias satirize various social, economic, and cultural aspects of the societies in which their authors have written them.

Tolkien addresses similar issues of pride and human longevity in his legendarium works, particularly those involving Númenor and the Second Age. In “Aldarion and Erendis,” for instance, Aldarion’s seafaring leads Erendis to doubt Aldarion’s love for Númenor. Aldarion argues, “I think also of what it may be in time to come, and the hope and splendor of its people; and I believe that a gift should not lie idle in hoard.” However, Erendis counters, “Such gifts as come from the Valar, and through them from the One, are to be loved for themselves now, and in all nows. They are not given for barter, for more or for better. The Edain remain mortal Men … great though they be: and we cannot dwell in the time that is to come, lest we lose our now for a phantom of our own design” (192). Thus, the attitudes of Aldarion and Erendis correspond roughly to those of Weston and the natives of Malacandra, respectively. While the Númenoreans remain mortal throughout the Second Age and beyond, holding onto life and “so in the end dying perforce and involuntarily … was one of the changes brought about by the Shadow and the rebellion of the Númenoreans” as a result of Sauron’s influence (Line” 235-36). The kings’ pride, envy of the undying elves, and seizing power by force precipitate the downfall of Númenor: in particular, when the kings of Númenor style themselves “Lord of the West,” those
faithful to Eru and the Valar consider it a blasphemous usurpation of their appellation for Manwë, one of the Valar (231-33).

The contrast in *Silent Planet* between the human hubris of cosmic imperialism and Malacandrian peace and contentment also underlies the rejection by Malacandra’s inhabitants of the kind of imperialism embraced in More’s Utopia. More depicts Utopia as establishing mainland colonies on at least a semi-regular basis, making war when a native population resists (49), and enslaving prisoners of war (70), despite ostensibly believing that nature binds all human beings together (76-77). Although this colonialism on one level represents a natural corollary of the Utopians’ belief that they possess superior social, political, and economic systems, it becomes particularly problematic for twentieth-century readers: as Lewis published *Silent Planet* in 1938, Marxists advocated exporting revolution and fascist regimes engaged in warfare and geopolitical bullying to gain territory. Meanwhile, imperialism also figures prominently in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Although Oceania has no “marked domination of one province by another” and “the administrators of any area are always drawn from the inhabitants of that area” so that in “no part of Oceania do the inhabitants have the feeling that they are a colonial population ruled from a distant capital” (208-09), Oceania and its rival states maintain a state of perpetual warfare and tenuous, shifting alliances, each vying for control of regions between each state proper. References to the Malabar front in southern India, for instance, occasionally feature in the background of Winston’s narrative (25), though in the epilogue the news is instead from a front in Africa (297). Emmanuel Goldstein’s forbidden book, *The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*, describes the conflict over the resources and cheap labor of Africa, the Middle East, India, and southeast Asia, referring to the populations of these areas as “scores of hundreds of millions of ill-paid and hard-working coolies.
… reduced more or less openly to the status of slaves” who “pass continually from conqueror to conqueror, and are expended like so much coal or oil in the race to turn out more armaments, to capture more territory, to control more labor power … and so on indefinitely” (187). Goldstein notes further that to these victims of imperialism “the war is simply a continuous calamity which sweeps to and fro over their bodies like a tidal wave. Which side is winning is a matter of complete indifference to them. They are aware that a change … means simply that they will be doing the same work as before for new masters who treat them in the same manner as the old ones” (214). In *Silent Planet*, however, when the residents of Malacandra were faced with the death of their planet, they were technologically capable of interplanetary travel and could potentially have colonized Earth; instead, with the help of Oyarsa, they transcended the fear of their planet’s mortality (138). *Silent Planet* thus satirically critiques much of the imperialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries much as the elements of imperialism in *Erewhon*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and other utopias and dystopias satirize the real-world imperialism of their respective eras.

Tolkien’s legendarium similarly addresses imperialism in the Númenor narratives, albeit in a more nuanced manner. Aldarion establishes Númenorean outposts in Middle-earth (“Aldarion” 185), despite the admonition of his father Meneldur, the king, to focus on ruling Númenor rather than colonizing Middle-earth (183). Aldarion defends this intervention, citing the fear of evil among the humans of Middle-earth (205), and Gil-galad, a king of the elves of Middle-earth, appeals to Meneldur for aid against Sauron, suggesting that Sauron will ultimately threaten Númenor if left unchecked in Middle-earth (209-10). Meneldur agonizes over whether to grant this aid, suggesting limits to their rightful domain: “When the Valar gave to us the Land of Gift they did not make us their vice-regents: we were given the Kingdom of Númenor, not of
the world.” However, Meneldur recognizes also the responsibility to stop evil: “Our fathers were
rewarded for the aid they gave in the defeat of the Great Shadow. Shall their sons stand aloof, if
evil finds a new head?” Meneldur further recognizes that either choice risks incurring the
displeasure of Eru, the monotheistic God of the legendarium (210). Although Aldarion’s exploits
prove the foundation for later Númenorean victory against Sauron (215), this victory in turn
leads to the downfall of Númenor.

The refusal of Malacandra to invade Earth in Lewis’s Ransom trilogy also responds to a
closely related feature of *Utopia*, namely the question of the intrinsic value of rational life.
Utopia’s conduct of war involves numerous practices “mischievously devised to flout the
chivalric code” (Lewis, *English* 29), implying that the Utopians cheaply esteem the life of a non-
Utopian. These practices include suborning assassinations and political kidnappings as well as
employing mercenaries in a manner that constitutes indirect ethnic cleansing (More 79, 81).
Likewise, the “endless purges, arrests, tortures, imprisonments, and vaporizations” of Oceania
suggest the Party’s valuation of individual human life (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 211). On
Malacandra, however, the life of a rational being, or *hnau*, whether that of one of the three native
species or a human life, is not to be taken by another *hnau* but only by Oyarsa: even after Weston
and Devine kill a *hross*, one of the *hnau*, in pursuit of Weston, the others refuse to kill Ransom
and capture the other humans alive at the cost of two more of their own lives (*Silent* 83, 125).
Even after Weston and Devine have killed three *hrossa* and threatened the rest of the population
of Malacandra and one of their own kind, Oyarsa expresses reluctance to execute them (133),
threatening to do so only if they refuse to leave Malacandra, because the humans come from and
belong “out of [Oyarsa’s] world” (139).
Dystopia among the Inklings

While *Silent Planet* depicts an extraterrestrial utopia, in the third volume of Lewis’s *Cosmic Trilogy*, *That Hideous Strength*, human effort at establishing utopia instead threatens to establish dystopia in England and beyond due to collective human hubris. The very title of *That Hideous Strength* invokes collective hubris, referring to the description of the Tower of Babel in sixteenth-century poet David Lyndsay’s *Ane Dialog* (Hilder 85). Central to the attempt at utopia in *That Hideous Strength* is the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments, or N.I.C.E., representing “that constructive fusion between the state and the laboratory on which so many thoughtful people base their hopes of a better world … free from almost all the tiresome restraints” of law and economics (*Hideous* 21). Describing itself as “strictly non-political” (97) and as a “peace-effort” (129), the N.I.C.E. aims “to get science applied to social problems … backed by the whole force of the state” (37). Devine, who in the interim has used his riches to gain a lordship and political power, notes that Weston was on the side of the N.I.C.E. and that Weston’s “interplanetary problem” is one of the Institute’s main objectives (16, 39), while Filostrato, a N.I.C.E. scientist, expresses optimism that the N.I.C.E. will “reconstruct” Weston’s ship from his manuscripts (175). He further suggests that the N.I.C.E. can use science to “take over the human race and re-condition it: make man a really efficient animal,” condemning any opposition as reactionary (39). For instance, the N.I.C.E. has its police force that emphasizes “remedial treatment” as a “rescuer” of the criminal to supplant “the old notion of ‘retributive’ or ‘vindicative’ punishment” (67, 129), adopting a therapeutic model common to earlier utopias as well as to such dystopias as Orwell and Burgess. The N.I.C.E. offers “a solution of the unemployment problem, the cancer problem, the housing problem, the problems of currency, of
war, of education” (130), promising “more trade … more public amenities, a larger population, a burst of undreamed-of prosperity” (131). Deputy Director Wither describes the N.I.C.E. as “so many brothers and … sisters” (203), recalling the fraternité of Robespierre and the French Revolution as well as Lenin’s call for “an international workers’ brotherhood” (“Letter”), and the N.I.C.E. presents itself as “the people’s Institute” (218). Like Filostrato, Wither equates opposition to the N.I.C.E. as “the cause of reaction” (272).

Still more utopian among the goals of the N.I.C.E. is immortality itself, again defying in pride any limit on human longevity. Filostrato hails “the conquest of death … the New Man, the man who will not die … free from Nature” (173-74). To that end, the N.I.C.E. reanimates the head of François Alcasan, a guillotined murderer, as the Head of the N.I.C.E. (174), further defying limits on human intelligence by experimentally enlarging his brain in hopes of augmenting his intellect (178, 193). This apparent immortality and transhuman ability foreshadows O’Brien’s characterization of the individual subsumed in the Party as “all-powerful and immortal” (Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four 264).

Despite its seemingly noble aims, the N.I.C.E. promotes totalitarian hierarchy in much the same manner as the Oligarchical Collectivism of Oceania’s ruling Party in Orwell, representing satire of many of the same elements of modernity from Lewis’s perspective as were satirized by Orwell, Huxley, and other dystopian authors. As Devine puts it, “Man has got to take charge of Man. That means … that some men have got to take charge of the rest.” Moreover, the N.I.C.E. agenda of “sterilization of the unfit [and] liquidation of backward races” recalls the eugenics programs of fascist regimes (40), while its plan for “re-education of the maladjusted” invokes totalitarian repression of dissent (41). Like the World State of Huxley’s Brave New World, and like O’Brien’s visions for a world in which “[children] will be taken from their
mothers at birth, as one takes eggs from a hen” (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 267), the N.I.C.E.
seeks to induce humanity to “reproduce … without copulation,” making humanity more
“governable” (*Hideous* 170), and like Oceania and its rival states in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-
Four*, the N.I.C.E. plans near-constant warfare to perpetuate its political control (256).

The practices of the N.I.C.E., furthermore, amply befit its totalitarian aims. Through
politics and force, the N.I.C.E. moves to “suspend the laws of England” (195). The N.I.C.E.
police, superseding the “ordinary police” (215), plant evidence to frame the innocent, and the
N.I.C.E. uses its law enforcement to protect its own members while keeping them under control
(203-09). Consisting in part of criminals and of veterans of such organizations as the British
Fascists and the Black and Tans (67, 154), the N.I.C.E. police brandish truncheons and discharge
firearms to terrorize the citizens and conduct mass arrests, prompting one woman to complain
that the situation is “almost as if we’d lost the war” against the Axis (74, 104, 212). When these
police arrest Jane Studdock during an engineered riot, Miss Hardcastle subjects her to torture and
simulated rape (152-53). While the N.I.C.E. ostensibly takes a therapeutic approach to crime,
this approach allows them to prolong indefinitely the sentence of a convict to inflict further
“therapy” on him or her (217-18). The N.I.C.E. takes control of the press to spread
disinformation and condition the population, suppressing any paper that refuses to print its
propaganda (218). The N.I.C.E. envisions even the results of the experiment with Alcasan’s head
as prefiguring immortality as an instrument of totalitarianism: Filostrato envisions government
reduced to “one … immortal man,” and the N.I.C.E. prepares to use the technique to disburse
“eternal punishment” and “make the dead live whether they wish it or not” (175-76). As Ransom
suggests, the experiment portends further stratification of humanity rather than egalitarian utopia:
“henceforward, all the creatures that you and I call human are mere candidates for admission to
the new species or else its slaves” (194). Moreover, the ultimate goal of the N.I.C.E. thus becomes a Promethean achievement of “the old dream of Man as God,” for humanity to “shake off … limitation of [its] powers” (200), similar to O’Brien’s vision of the all-powerful Party in Orwell; accordingly, the symbol for the N.I.C.E. is “a muscular male … grasping a thunderbolt” (212).

Within the N.I.C.E., totalitarian realpolitik prevails. The upper echelons of the N.I.C.E. eliminate or sacrifice individuals and entire departments when they outlive their usefulness (96, 167). Miss Hardcastle threatens her subordinates with the same “humane remedial treatment” the N.I.C.E. practices on criminals (154), and the threat of reanimation keeps Mark Studdock in line through terror during most of his period of involvement with the N.I.C.E. (182). Meanwhile, the N.I.C.E. demands unlimited subservience from its members (117, 172), demanding even that Studdock trample a crucifix as part of his initiation (331-34), while the N.I.C.E. routinely places its members in no-win scenarios (158). Backbiting and paranoia prevail even among the highest leaders of the N.I.C.E. (262, 333). Furthermore, leaving the N.I.C.E. is impossible (78, 122).

When a disgruntled colleague named Hingeist expresses intent to depart (56), objecting to its “political conspiracy” and its agenda of redistribution (69), his murdered body surfaces hours later (79). The members who stay in the N.I.C.E. and survive lie to each other (169) and “know that at any moment they may be demoted, dismissed, have their careers ruined, be charged with murder, executed, or handed over to the torture chambers of the … institutional police” (Shippey, “Ransom” 246). In short, the N.I.C.E. is a “world of plot within plot, crossing and double-crossing, of lies and graft and stabbing in the back, of murder and a contemptuous guffaw for the fool who lost the game” (Hideous 242).
Like the ruling party of Oceania in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the N.I.C.E. manipulates the press to distort the truth and manipulate the populace. Whereas Winston Smith invents and eulogizes a fictional Comrade Ogilvy to salvage a “doubleplusungood” article in the *Times* (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 44-48), Mark Studdock, under duress from the N.I.C.E., writes a series of articles rehabilitating the reputation of Alcasan, the executed murderer, into that of a martyr and questioning the justice of the execution (*Hideous* 96). Later, when the N.I.C.E. engineers a riot to acquire emergency powers for itself, Studdock, again under duress, writes a pair of propaganda-laden analyses of the riot before it has even taken place, one each for the highbrow and lowbrow newspapers (126-32). In the latter article, Studdock dismisses any comparisons of the N.I.C.E. police to the Gestapo and the Secret Police of the Stalin-era purges and the gulags, equating “the liberties of England” with “the liberties of the obscurantists … the Bishops, and the capitalists” (131), invoking the same scapegoats the Ingsoc Party employs (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 202, 242).

The totalitarian dystopia of the N.I.C.E. in *That Hideous Strength*, like that of Orwell, Huxley, and others, represents the dark side of the utopian impulse as Lewis describes it in his analysis of More’s *Utopia*, and Lewis notes that Utopia has its own totalitarian leanings, which prefigure the real and fictional totalitarian states of the twentieth century. Lewis argues that *Utopia* “has its serious, even its tragic, elements” and that there “is nothing in the book on which the later More, the heretic-hunter, need have turned his back. There is no freedom of speech in Utopia. There is nothing liberal in Utopia. From it … liberty is more successfully banished than the real world, even at its worst, allows … It is not love of liberty that makes men write Utopias” (*English* 168). Edward James notes that as a Catholic, More “believed that original sin had to be restrained by strict laws” and that “More’s utopian society, not accidentally, is like a Benedictine
monastery … All watch each other closely for signs of disobedience” much as the Party members in Orwell and the N.I.C.E. members in That Hideous Strength opportunistically monitor each other (220). James’s assessment corroborates that of Lewis: “More was from the very first … an ascetic with a hankering for the monastic life” (English 170). The surveillance James describes anticipates that of Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four, in which “[you] had to live—did live, from habit that became instinct—in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and … every movement scrutinized” (3), and in which even children regularly denounce their parents to the Thought Police (24-25), as in the case of Winston’s neighbor Parsons (233).

The presence of an Oyarsa for each planet in Lewis’s trilogy and their combined role in stopping the N.I.C.E. in That Hideous Strength represent the trilogy’s greatest departure from More’s Utopia as well as most of its other successor utopias and dystopias, which eschew direct supernatural intervention. J. C. Garrett thus describes Out of the Silent Planet in particular as a “spiritual Utopia” (46), and Brian Atteberry suggests that this departure is at cross purposes with that of the utopia itself:

> Encounters with the numinous can inspire fear and trembling or ecstatic joy. What they do not do is motivate rational, collective action. Hence the avoidance of all forms of the fantastic within most utopian fiction. The devoutly Catholic Thomas More left miracles and mysteries out of his Utopia. … It seems that the pull toward utopia is a force equal but opposite to the yearning for the numinous. The utopian imagination requires a Mundane approach in order to convince the reader that ordinary human beings, working together rationally, can make the world better. (136)

Thus, according to Gottlieb, in satirical works such as Nineteen Eighty-Four “the catharsis consists of another kind of recognition: that we are still in front of the catastrophe and therefore are in possession of the freedom to avert it” (252). Similarly, Lewis explicitly disavows quietism in relating the danger that Weston and the N.I.C.E. present and the necessity of opposing them:
“we have also evidence—increasing almost daily—that ‘Weston,’ or the force or forces behind ‘Weston,’ will play a very important part in the events of the next few centuries, and, unless we prevent them, a very disastrous one” (*Out of the Silent Planet* 151).12

However, the role of the Oyarsa and *eldila* in governing Malacandra and opposing the N.I.C.E. lies at the heart of Lewis’s response to the utopia and what stands in the way of its establishment, and it represents the most fundamental difference between Lewis’s vision of utopia and dystopia and those of his secular predecessors and contemporaries. Oyarsa and similar incorporeal beings known as *eldila* are the ruling authorities of Malacandra (*Silent* 69-70), and when an *eldil* orders that Ransom should be sent to Oyarsa, the *hrossa* unquestioningly obey, preparing to abandon their hunt to teach Ransom the way to Oyarsa (80-81). When Ransom delays the journey to Oyarsa so that the hunt can continue and one *hross* is killed by Weston and Devine, the *hrossa* blame the death not on Ransom, nor even on Weston and Devine, but on failure to obey the *eldil* (83). On the journey to Oyarsa, when the *sorns*, one of the other two intelligent species on Malacandra, question Ransom about human history, some of the *sorns* attribute humanity’s propensity for warfare and slavery to having no Oyarsa or *eldila*, while others attribute it to everyone on Earth wishing to be his or her own Oyarsa (102). At Meldilorn, Ransom learns that the Oyarsa of Earth became “bent” and attempted to destroy the ecosystem and all the *hnau* of Malacandra before being sealed within Earth’s atmosphere (120). The Oyarsa of Malacandra describes his counterpart from Earth as having similarly “bent” Weston to

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12 Lewis places Weston’s name in quotation marks here because his framing device in *Out of the Silent Planet* suggests that both Ransom’s name and Weston’s are fictitious (150-51), despite the later significance of Ransom’s name in *Perelandra* (125-26). Lewis suggests that a “systematic report of these facts … would almost certainly result in universal incredulity and in a libel action from ‘Weston’ … It was Dr. Ransom who first saw that our only chance was to publish in the form of fiction what would certainly not be listened to as fact” (*Out of the Silent Planet* 151-52).
obsession with perpetuating humanity and “broken” Devine into nothing but avarice and as
having attempted to corrupt the *hnau* of Malacandra with fear of their planet’s death (137-38).
On Earth, according to Oyarsa, the Bent One “wastes your [humans’] lives and befouls them
with flying from what you know will overtake you in the end” (138-39).

On Malacandra, however, peace prevails because Oyarsa and the other *eldila* are ruled by
Maleldil (102), whom the natives of Malacandra describe as the creator and ruler of the world,
living with the Old One, and “a spirit without body, parts or passions” (69). The natives of
Malacandra likewise describe Maleldil as the maker of all *hnau*, including humans (137), and as
being behind Oyarsa’s actions (133, 138). They also credit Maleldil with enabling an
environment without scarcity that precludes warfare between *hnau* on Malacandra (73). This
absence of scarcity is a key ingredient to a utopia even in More’s *Utopia* (46-47, 95), and in
Orwell, an artificial scarcity as a result of perpetual warfare is requisite for the Oceania regime’s
oppression (188-92). By contrast, the post-scarcity society of Malacandra reflects not necessarily
a miraculous abundance of resources per se but rather Lewis’s aforementioned premise that “it is
by human avarice or human stupidity, not by the churlishness of nature, that we have poverty and
overwork” (*Problem* 86). In *Perelandra*, Tor further describes Maleldil existing alongside “His
Father and the Third One” (180). The Oyarsa of Malacandra argues that humanity could achieve
peace by subjecting itself to Maleldil, though Weston, reluctant even to acknowledge Oyarsa’s
existence (*Silent* 125-29), prefers to “fight, jump, live” with the Bent One (139), and Weston
ultimately calls the Bent One or one of his allies into himself in *Perelandra* (82-83, 96). In
*Perelandra*, no *eldila* are as obviously active as on Malacandra, but Tinidril and Tor, the two
native inhabitants, receive direct guidance from Maleldil (71). Further, when they reunite, the Oyarsa of Perelandra tells them, “My word henceforth is nothing” (177), suggesting that the Oyarsa of that world had also previously guided them.

The presence of Oyarsa and eldila and the prominence of Maleldil and the Bent One within the Cosmic Trilogy place the role of the supernatural in Lewis’s work starkly at odds with that of More’s Utopia as well as that of the utopias of the late nineteenth century and the modernist dystopias of Huxley and Orwell. In Huxley, for instance, Mustapha Mond claims that God “manifests himself as an absence; as though he weren’t there at all” and that “God isn’t compatible with … universal happiness” (234), and in Nineteen Eighty-Four, O’Brien argues that “God is power” (264). Although the Utopians consider atheists potentially subversive to societal order (More 86), religious pluralism otherwise prevails on the island (84), and in public worship, “nothing is seen or heard … that does not square with all the creeds” of the various Utopian religions, so that each individual “may be free to form his own image of God … in any shape he pleases” (91). Although miracles occur occasionally (88), supernatural interference from any specific deity is rare to nonexistent. In the Cosmic Trilogy, the immanence of Oyarsa and eldila precludes such pluralism, but it also precludes any organized religion. Neither Malacandra nor Perelandra has any temple or priests, though Tor and Tinidril contemplate building “a great place to the splendour of Maleldil” on Perelandra in the future (Perelandra 181). The hrossa conduct a funeral of sorts for the dead, led by Oyarsa and consisting of a song and the disintegration of the bodies (Silent 130-31), but this procession is all that Ransom encounters of any semblance of Malacandrian religion.

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13 Tolkien argued that the naming of Tor and Tinidril was “certainly an echo” of Tuor and Idril of “The Fall of Gondolin” (qtd. in Carpenter 171).
Lewis’s invocation of the corrupt nature of humanity as impediment to utopia on Earth and his recourse to the supernatural in maintaining utopia on other planets follows the objection of Morus, or More as a character, in Book I of Utopia: “it is impossible to make everything good unless you make all men good, and that I don’t expect to see for a long time to come” (34). Ransom describes human history in the Cosmic Trilogy as “the terrible slavery of appetite and hate and economics and government” (Perelandra 114), and in discussing human history in his theological writings, Lewis blames Satan and his influence on humanity for social ills: “Terrific energy is expended—[civilizations] are built up—excellent institutions devised; but each time something goes wrong. Some fatal flaw always brings the selfish and cruel people to the top and it all slides back into misery and ruin … That is what Satan has done to us humans” (Mere 54).

In the Cosmic Trilogy, Earth is a cosmic anomaly, a peculiarly silent planet with rational beings who suffer from “cosmically exceptional blindness” (Suvin 178), but this state of affairs extends also to the near side of Earth’s moon, which the Bent One “smote” (Silent 120), as Ransom describes to Merlin:

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\text{The rim of the world that was wasted [Earth] goes through her. Half of her orb is turned toward us and shares our curse. Her other half looks to Deep Heaven; happy would he be who could cross that frontier and see the fields on her further side. On this side, the womb is barren and the marriages cold. There dwell an accursed people, full of pride and lust. There when a young man takes a maiden in marriage, they do not lie together, but each lies with a cunningly fashioned image of the other, made to move and to be warm by devilish arts, for real flesh will not please them, they are so dainty (delicati) in their dreams of lust. Their real children they fabricate by vile arts in a secret place. (Hideous 270-1)}
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The N.I.C.E. corroborates this description of lunar civilization, as Filostrato tells Mark Studdock of a “great race, further advanced than we … [they] retain their intelligence: they can keep it

\[14\text{ In Tolkien’s Morgoth’s Ring (1993), Melkor creates the moon and similarly uses it as a stronghold and observatory, barren and lifeless (41-42), though Christopher Tolkien finds this element exceptional in comparison to other references to the moon in the legendarium (43).} \]
artificially alive after the organic body has been dispensed with” (173). This juxtaposition of artificial sexual gratification and artificial production of children reflects that of Huxley’s *Brave New World* and anticipates that which O’Brien describes in his interrogation of Winston (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 267), as well as the Party’s longer-term aims: “All children were to be begotten by artificial insemination (*artsem*, it was called in Newspeak) and brought up in public institutions” (65-66).

This view of humanity, according to Lewis, suggests that any secular human attempt to establish a utopia on Earth entails the danger of instead creating injustice, misery, and dystopia, and the commonalities between More’s *Utopia*, the early modernist utopias, and the dystopias of Huxley and Orwell corroborate Lewis’s assessment. Lewis expands upon this point in *That Hideous Strength*, where the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments seeks to “take control of birth, breeding, and death” (Meilaender 126), and where “men together do very bad things before they are individually very bad men” (Lobdell, *World* 99). Ransom’s internal monologue in *That Hideous Strength* suggests that the N.I.C.E. represents “a real chance for fallen Man to shake off that limitation of his powers which mercy had imposed upon him as a protection from the full results of his fall. If [the N.I.C.E.] succeeded, Hell would be at last incarnate. Bad men, while still in the body, still crawling on this little globe … would have the [immortality] and power of evil spirits” (200-01).

Tolkien employed a similar paradigm of a hierarchy of rational and supernatural beings and rebellion in his Middle Earth. Tolkien’s legendarium posits a monotheistic God, Eru Ilúvatar, as well as the Valar, “the guardians of the world, who are not gods but angelic powers, themselves holy and subject to God” (Carpenter 91). Like the Bent Oyarsa of Earth among his extraterrestrial counterparts in Lewis, Melkor from among the Valar, later known as Morgoth,
rebels and incites further rebellion in Tolkien. According to Carpenter, Tolkien’s elves, “though capable of sin and error, have not ‘fallen’ in the theological sense, and so are able to achieve much beyond the powers of men” (93), much like the inhabitants of Malacandra and Perelandra in Lewis. Carpenter further notes that “at one terrible moment in the story” the Valar intercede for Eru Ilúvatar to intervene directly (91). This intervention results in the cataclysmic downfall of Númenor and reshaping of Middle Earth. Similarly, Lewis argues that direct supernatural intervention in history will mean the end of history: “When that happens, it is the end of the world. When the author walks on to the stage the play is over” (Mere 66).¹⁵

However, an ahistorical or post-historical environment is common to fictional utopias and dystopias, including both More’s Utopia and Lewis’s Silent Planet. In Utopia, for instance, little of the history of Utopia appears, with two exceptions: the establishment of Utopia following the conquest of Abraxa by Utopus (39, 85) and the influx of western learning and introduction of Christianity brought about by Hythloday and his party (67, 85). Likewise, both the World State of Huxley and Oceania in Orwell establish ahistorical societies. Mustapha Mond approvingly cites “that beautiful and inspired saying of Our Ford’s: History is bunk” (Huxley 34), and he later tells John Savage that “[we] haven’t any use for old things here” (219), showing John a collection of old books locked away in a safe (230-31). Meanwhile, the ruling Party in Oceania renders history nearly unknowable through the constant revisions of the Ministry of Truth and the doublethink of loyal Party members. Similarly, on Malacandra, although an individual may be memorialized in song (Silent 75, 97), the recorded history of the planet concludes with the

¹⁵ In Tolkien’s legendarium, Eru Ilúvatar and many of the Valar, particularly Manwë, are distant from the immediate events of The Lord of the Rings, The Hobbit, and much of The Silmarillion for similar reasons, with rare exceptions such as the aforementioned cataclysm of Númenor: “When we move out Manwë it will be the last battle, and the end of the World (or of ‘Arda Marred’) as the Eldar would say” (Morgoth’s 399).
corruption and imprisonment of the Bent Oyarsa of Earth and the construction of artificial lowlands by the Oyarsa and natives of Malacandra (110); thereafter, the planet is “a static, or largely static, world” (Lobdell, Scientifiction 38). Moreover, just as the arrival of Hythloday’s party is historically noteworthy for Utopia, the arrival of Ransom, Weston, and Devine likewise is a noteworthy point in Malacandrian history, which the natives record in sculpture (111-13).

Lewis and More’s Utopia: Tropes and Techniques

Another way in which Lewis invokes the tradition of Menippean satire in utopia and dystopia involves Lewis’s use of early Renaissance humanist tropes and literary techniques in the trilogy. For instance, Lewis juxtaposes dual literary avatars in a manner reminiscent of More’s dual protagonists and avatars within Utopia. More writes himself into Book I of Utopia, using the framing device of a diplomatic mission to Bruges to set up a meeting between his fictionalized self, whom scholars such as John M. Rist refer to using the name Morus to distinguish between character and author (751), and Raphael Hythloday, in which Hythloday describes his travels to Utopia and elsewhere (More 9-13). While the two characters spend much of Book I at odds over Morus’s attempt to persuade Hythloday to enter the service of a king or prince (14), they converse sympathetically and even find shared past connections such as both having shared the company of Cardinal Morton (15-16). Accordingly, scholars of More view Hythloday as “More’s humanistic other self” (Guy 9). While Book I consists primarily of dialogue between Morus and Hythloday, most of Book II takes the form of a treatise on the practices of the Utopians, and Morus reveals himself as a character only in his response to learning of these practices from Hythloday (More 96-97).
Lewis, like More in *Utopia*, writes himself into his work in the Cosmic Trilogy, introducing himself as a scholar of medieval Platonism and Latin (*Silent* 150-51). Lewis describes himself as “Oxford-bred and very fond of Cambridge” (*Hideous* 15), paralleling his real-life career path as fellow at Magdalen College at Oxford and professor of medieval literature at Cambridge (Lazo 221). Like More, Lewis gives his own name to the avatar presented as a foil for the traveler: Ransom addresses the narrator as “Lewis” in an epistolary postscript in *Silent Planet* and in dialogue in *Perelandra* (*Silent* 154; *Perelandra* 20, 22). In the character of Elwin Ransom, Lewis also composes a traveler to utopia similar to More’s Hythloday. Lewis describes Ransom early in *Silent Planet* as “fellow of a Cambridge college” and as a don (10, 19). Devine, who has an academic fellowship of his own (18), even introduces Ransom to Weston as “The Ransom, you know” (15), and he later describes Ransom to Mark Studdock in *That Hideous Strength* as a “respectable Cambridge don” (39). Devine’s corresponding introduction of Weston to Ransom as “The Weston … [the] great physicist. Has Einstein on toast and drinks a pint of Schrödinger’s blood for breakfast” suggests that Devine is in both instances indirectly self-aggrandizing by emphasizing his connections (*Silent* 15), posturing in a manner well befitting a future lord, politician, and would-be university administrator (*Hideous* 16-17). However, other characters within the trilogy express more sincere admiration for Ransom: Jane Studdock, a doctoral candidate studying Donne (12), recognizes Ransom as a leading philologist whose *Dialect and Semantics* is a seminal text in that field (187), and even the leaders of the Institute recognize Ransom’s philological expertise (272). Lewis’s eponymous avatar, for his part, had consulted with Ransom on philological and literary matters; when Lewis wrote Ransom asking
about the word *Oyares* in a text by Bernardus Silvestris, Ransom shared the story of his travel to Malacandra with Lewis (*Silent* 151).16

However, just as More differentiates himself from Hythloday, Lewis differentiates himself from Ransom. While Ransom and Lewis share an academic background and many other traits, such as being veterans of World War I and a common hobby of walking tours (*Perelandra* 94; Lobdell, *Scientifiction* 34), Ransom differs from Lewis in having a background in philology that fortuitously allows him to learn the language of Malacandra (Sammons, “*Far-Off*” 157).17 In fact, Ransom’s first thoughts upon learning that such a language exists are to contemplate the project of a grammar of Malacandra and the various titles he might affix to such a text, along with the lessons on the structure of language that could be learned from a nonhuman language (*Silent* 56). Lewis, though also author of a book titled *Studies on Words*, emphatically “was not a philologist and did not think or write like one” (Lobdell, *World* 42), and he relates elsewhere that as a fellow of Magdalen College, he distrusted philologists, though this distrust abated as he began and maintained a decades-long friendship with philologist J. R. R. Tolkien (*Surprised* 215-16; Whittingham 21), even dedicating *Screwtape Letters* to Tolkien (*Screwtape* v). Lewis wrote the Cosmic Trilogy “during the time of Tolkien’s maximum influence on Lewis” (Lobdell, *World* 44), and the trilogy represents part of an effort by both authors to “self-consciously … rehabilitate the fairy story, including the enormous task of restoring it as a medium for grown-

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16 Sammons points out that Bernardus Silvestris’s *Cosmographia* significantly influenced the narrative form of Lewis’s science fiction (“*Better*” 127).

17 Lewis notes similarly that “Weston, for the sake of the plot, has to be a physicist” to be able to invent the spaceships he uses in *Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*, although “his interests seem to be exclusively biological.” Lewis quips that were he to criticize his own work, he “should … have asked whether it was credible that such a gas-bag could ever have invented a mouse-trap, let [alone] a space-ship. But then, I wanted farce as well as fantasy” (“*Reply*” 101).
ups” (Duriez, “Fairy” 18). Lewis read both *Silent Planet* and *Perelandra* aloud to Tolkien and the other Inklings prior to the books’ publication (Lazo 213-14), and Tolkien wrote in a letter to publisher Stanley Unwin that Lewis made revisions of the philological material “to [Tolkien’s] satisfaction” in *Silent Planet (Letters 33).* Accordingly, Tolkien wrote also in a letter to Christopher that although “Ransom is not meant to be a portrait” of him, he recognized that “as a philologist [he] may have some part in him” and recognized “some of [his] opinions and ideas Lewisified” in Ransom (*Letters 89*).

Lewis’s use of dual protagonists is relatively subtle throughout most of the Cosmic Trilogy, but the similarity nonetheless suggests the influence of More’s fiction on that of Lewis. Most of the material in the first two novels is written in the third person and follows Ransom’s point of view, while *That Hideous Strength* alternates between the perspectives of Jane Studdock, Mark Studdock, Ransom, and a few others; however, a few brief phrases in first person demonstrate a separate narrator behind the point-of-view characters. For example, when Ransom first hears the speech of a *hross*, the narrator interjects, “If you are not yourself a philologist, I am afraid you must take on trust the prodigious emotional consequences … in Ransom’s mind” (*Silent 56*).\(^{18}\) Later, when Ransom is privately questioned by Oyarsa, the narrator shows his hand in admitting that he is “not allowed to record this conversation” (141). These instances of first-person interjection are easy to overlook: Peter J. Schakel, for instance, omits them in claiming that *Silent Planet* sticks to Ransom’s point of view until chapter 22 (*Imagination 70*). However, to dismiss the “I am afraid” clause above as a meaningless turn of

\(^{18}\) Tom Shippey notes that Tolkien uses similar authorial interjections “to make the reader feel that [the legendarium] had a sort of existence outside the immediate narrative,” pointing to such phrases in *The Hobbit* as “I suppose hobbits need some description nowadays,” “If you had heard only a quarter of what I have heard about [Gandalf],” and the omnipresent “of course” interjections (*Tolkien 18-19*).
phrase risks impoverishing the text, as seemingly innocuous phrases in the trilogy occasionally reveal additional depth within the text. Michael Ward, for example, notes that Ransom’s first words to Lewis in *Perelandra* are “By Jove, I’m glad to see you” and argues that the phrase “by Jove” indicates the involvement of Jove, or the Oyarsa of Jupiter, in sustaining Lewis through an encounter with hostile *eldila* (48). That the Oya of Jupiter exerts further influence on Ransom’s company in *That Hideous Strength* corroborates Ward’s argument (323-24).

In *Perelandra*, although Lewis initially foregrounds his eponymous character, the focus quickly returns to Ransom, with subtle secondhand narration. At the outset of *Perelandra*, Ransom cryptically summons Lewis for assistance (10), and Lewis learns that Ransom is being sent to the planet Perelandra (20). After Lewis narrates Ransom’s departure and subsequent return to Earth, the point of view shifts back to Ransom, and while the narrator, as before in *Silent Planet*, reveals his hand occasionally with phrases like “I take it” (*Perelandra* 30) and “he must have been” (31), his role quickly fades to the background to shift focus to Ransom’s experiences. Similarly, in *That Hideous Strength*, although most of the narrative follows the alternating points of view of Jane and Mark Studdock, Lewis the narrator occasionally shows his hand early, most obviously in describing Bracton College, the setting for much of the first part of the book, but also notably in relating subtext and analysis of a meeting at the college. When the meeting reaches an agenda item concerning the salaries of junior fellows, Lewis as narrator interjects, “I would not like to say what the most junior Fellows of Bracton were getting at this time, but I believe it hardly covered the expenses of their residence in College, which was compulsory” (24). These first-person remarks, into which Lewis as author “put twenty years’ experience of ‘office politics’” and his own “unforced, but donnish, sense of humor” (Shippey, “Ransom” 244; Lobdell, * Scientifiction* 115), fit the persona Lewis has established for himself
while explaining the proceedings within the chapter as though to readers outside or new to academia, recalling his earlier academic explanation of Ransom’s interest in the speech of the hross in *Silent Planet*. However, as in *Perelandra*, Lewis as narrator again quickly gets out of the way to shift focus to the narrative.

A significant corollary of Lewis’s use of dual protagonists is the reliance of the text on secondhand narrative, further following the example of More and *Utopia*. Since everything to be learned about Utopia and the other exotic lands described in *Utopia* comes from Hythloday’s description, acceptance of the conditions in Utopia and elsewhere stands or falls with Hythloday’s credibility. Hythloday himself tells Morus, “[You] should have been with me in Utopia, and seen with your own eyes their manners and customs as I did … If you had seen them, you would frankly confess that you had never seen a people well governed anywhere but there” (37), and Hythloday anticipates disbelief over the Utopians’ ignoble use of gold and silver (54-55). Lewis and Ransom similarly anticipate popular incredulity over Ransom’s voyages, and even Ransom himself expresses doubts about his own experiences shortly after his trip to Malacandra (*Silent 150-51*); accordingly, the strategy of Ransom and Lewis is to “publish in the form of fiction what would certainly not be listened to as fact” (152). Additionally, early in *Perelandra* Lewis’s narrator briefly expresses skepticism about Ransom’s experience, particularly in the “Dark Lord, this depraved Oyarsa of [Earth]” and his role in threatening utopia on Malacandra and preventing it on Earth; however, Lewis feels “ashamed” of having doubted (20). The only chapter from Lewis’s point of view, with Ransom absent, further bolsters Ransom’s credibility. Throughout this chapter, which Lobdell describes as “not … purely realistic” (*Scientifiction* 96), Lewis relates his own struggles with fear of visiting Ransom and of encountering the *eldila* with whom Ransom had interacted on Malacandra. Lewis notes that he
doubts his own sanity, believing himself to be experiencing “the beginning of a nervous breakdown” (*Perelandra* 12). Even amidst this struggle, Lewis reaffirms Ransom’s credibility: “The reader, not knowing Ransom, will not understand how contrary to all reason this idea was. The rational part of my mind, even at that moment, knew perfectly well that even if the whole universe were crazy and hostile, Ransom was sane and wholesome and honest” (*Perelandra* 13). This implicit trust in Ransom is not limited to Lewis’s avatar: in *That Hideous Strength*, Jane Studdock immediately trusts Ransom’s account of his trip to Mars, even though she receives the account secondhand from Ransom’s most skeptical colleague (187).

Lewis further bolters Ransom’s authority in an epistolary postscript of *Silent Planet* in much the same way that More adds to Hythloday’s credibility in an introductory letter to Giles at the beginning of *Utopia*, further demonstrating the influence of *Utopia* on the Cosmic Trilogy. More, who in Book I of *Utopia* credits Giles with introducing him to Hythloday (10) and helping him attempt to persuade Hythloday to enter a king’s service (14), writes Giles, asking him to consult with Hythloday on a few points related to the rest of the forthcoming book (7-8). Lewis’s postscript, by contrast, takes the form of an excerpt from an epistle directly from Ransom to Lewis, similar to Tolkien’s letter on *Silent Planet* to publisher Stanley Unwin, in which Ransom addresses a few perceived inadequacies of the manuscript, ranging from what Ransom as a philologist perceives as inadequate attention to the language of Malacandra to minor plot points to scenes Ransom wishes could have been incorporated into the narrative (*Silent* 153-58).

In addition to the dual protagonist motif, *Perelandra* in particular also employs Renaissance-style dialogue, demonstrating More’s influence by reflecting the dialogue between Morus, Giles, and Hythloday in *Utopia*. A key trait of Renaissance dialogue is the absence of an immediate authority to speak on and thereby resolve a topic, short-circuiting any debate on the
issue. Brian Vickers argues that “the dominant form of Renaissance dialogue was not the Platonic, in which a privileged and dominant speaker exposes the limitations of his partners’ thinking”; instead, “distinct characters or personae espouse distinct attitudes” (qtd. in Hart 110). Thus, Peter Burke suggests, Renaissance dialogue represents an “open’ or sceptical dialogue” rather than a “‘closed’ or didactic form” such as the Platonic dialogue (3). The necessity of this feature for such dialogue takes center stage in Book I of Utopia during Hythloday’s description of a dialogue in the court of Cardinal Morton. In this dialogue, Hythloday criticizes the justice system of England and the propensity of English capitalist society to reduce many individuals to poverty and crime, inciting a debate with a lawyer at Morton’s court (More 16-21). While Morton acts as a moderator to the dialogue (21), his presence and expression of his opinion cuts short the dialogue in the Platonic manner Vickers describes. When Hythloday describes to Morton’s court the justice of the Polyclerites and suggests that it be implemented in England, everyone present reacts with incredulity. However, when Morton expresses willingness to see it attempted, the opinion of the room reverses abruptly (25). In part to prevent the dialogue between Morus, Giles, and Hythloday from being similarly short-circuited, the three men converse on equal footing throughout Book I of Utopia, and Hythloday is free to evaluate his friends’ proposal that he enter civil service strictly on its own merits. Lewis suggests in English Literature that it remains unclear throughout the debate “which of the speakers, if any, represents [the author] More’s considered opinion” (169). That Hythloday’s surname derives from the Greek hythlos or “nonsense” and daiein “to distribute” cautions against taking Hythloday’s

19 The Renaissance dialogue thus also eschews the later Inquisitorial form of dialogue codified in Dostoevsky’s The Brothers Karamazov in the chapter “The Grand Inquisitor.”
position at face value (More 7); however, Morus recalls the *Moriae Encomium* or *Praise of Folly* of Erasmus, suggesting a degree of folly in both men.

A similarly even dialogue in *Perelandra* occurs between Ransom and Weston, apparently possessed by the Bent Oyarsa from Earth (82-83, 102), before Tinidril, the Green Lady native to Perelandra. Although the motif of temptation in an Eden-like setting incurs obvious debts to Milton and *Paradise Lost*, this dialogue, which forms “the core of the work” (Shippey, “Ransom” 242), further demonstrates More’s literary influence on Lewis. Central to the dialogue between Ransom and Weston is a commandment by Maleldil that the natives of Perelandra not sleep or dwell on a fixed land but remain on the floating islands that comprise most of the planet (*Perelandra* 63-65). Weston attempts to convince Tinidril to disobey this edict (89), thereby offering her “settled life, all command of [her] own days” (101), while Ransom attempts to persuade her to continue to obey Maleldil and to allow Maleldil to enlighten her instead (101, 99). Although Tinidril on other occasions receives wisdom directly from Maleldil (53), Maleldil does not intervene during the dialogue (90), no *eldila* are at work on Perelandra (71), and Tor, the only other member of her species, whom she calls the King (56-57), is absent throughout; moreover, the Un-man argues that Tinidril “must … force [Tor] to be free” by disobeying Maleldil and leading Tor to do the same (112), in much the same way that John Savage attempts to force freedom on the Deltas in *Brave New World* by destroying their soma supply.

Accordingly, with no higher authority figures to cut short the debate, Tinidril moderates the dialogue, seeking to make both Weston and Ransom wiser (72, 98), bidding each man speak in turn (101), adjourning each session of the dialogue as she pleases (103, 109-10), and chastising Ransom for interrupting Weston and trying to prevent him from being heard (97), a violation of Erasmus’s call for respect and civility in dialogue (Remer 307).
Although Ransom’s position as the point-of-view character casts Weston as the antagonist, Weston is certainly no straw opponent for Ransom in this dialogue. In fact, Weston’s appeals frequently align with the individualistic resistance of Winston Smith, John Savage, Offred/June, and other dystopian protagonists to the collectivist authoritarian regimes under which they exist. Weston offers compelling incentives for Tinidril to disobey Maleldil, asking her whether Maleldil “does not really, in his heart, mean her to show independence by going against his will, and not just accepting whatever he sends” (Shippey, “Ransom” 243). Hilder suggests that Weston “challenges her to self-reliance [,] to supremacy [, and] to self-will … to leave her current apparent insignificance to become exceedingly ‘great,’ ‘wise,’ and ‘courageous’”; meanwhile, he characterizes Ransom’s counsel to obey Maleldil as reactionary, “to limit [woman], disregarding the great purpose which the divine had intended for her” (56). Weston invokes the “classical feminine heroic image—that of a self-reliant, pioneering, [tragic] queen superior to weaker and would-be domineering males” (72). As the dialogue progresses, Tinidril “with full intellectual capacity negotiates knowledge that is conveyed by fallen human beings” and “demonstrates significant acumen as she counters both men” (67), showing herself to be “a significant intellect” in that she “sustains the concept of multiple reasons and forms of knowledge and ignorance with ease” (68). Tinidril thus takes the role of a wise female moderator in much the same way that the Duchess of Urbino, with the assistance of signora Emilia, moderates the discussion on ideal courtiers in Castiglione’s The Book of the Courtier (13-14, 19-20), with which Lewis was also familiar in his role as professor of medieval and Renaissance literature (English 274, 305-06). The series of dialogues continues inconclusively (Perelandra 120), and an internal dialogue within Ransom as he ponders how to stop Weston parallels the external dialogue between the men (120-27). Ultimately, just as no clear “winner” emerges from
More’s dialogue, the dialogue between Ransom and Weston is not “won” by either man; at the prompting of Maleldil, Ransom resolves upon a physical altercation with Weston (126-27). Although Shippey decries the inconclusive outcome of the dialogue as evasive on Lewis’s part (“Ransom” 243), it preserves the controversial nature of the dialogue by refusing to hand victory in the debate to the side with which Lewis sympathizes.  

The dialogue in *Perelandra* thus represents a return to the Renaissance dialogue ofMorus and Hythloday as a device of Menippean satire, in contrast to the Inquisitorial dialogue of the debates between John Savage and Mustapha Mond in *Brave New World* and between Winston Smith and O’Brien in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, as well as the Platonic dialogue of William Guest’s dialogue with Hammond in *News from Nowhere* and even between Ransom and Weston in *Out of the Silent Planet*. Although John Savage’s immersion in the world of Shakespeare leaves him somewhat naïve and out of place in the London of AF 632, Mustapha Mond defends the World State cynically at best. Meanwhile, that O’Brien alternates between philosophically defending the Party and torturing Winston clearly casts O’Brien as the antagonist, much as the Inquisitor of Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*, though Keith Alldritt argues that O’Brien’s interrogation of Winston also follows the paradigm in Wells and elsewhere that “the hero at last encounters some figure with power and information who explains the mystifying world to him” (151). By contrast, the dialogue of Guest and Hammond reflects that of Socrates and the other interlocutors in the Platonic dialogues: just as Socrates enters the dialogue already knowing all the correct answers and teasing them out of his listeners, at no point does Guest appear to have

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20 Tolkien employs dialogue similarly in “Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth,” in which the elf Finrod and the human Andreth debate on the nature of death and the contrast between the immortality of the elves and the mortality of humans (*Morgoth’s 301-66*). Although Finrod’s side of the dialogue aligns more closely with the broader cosmogony and cosmology of Eä, Andreth remains sympathetic throughout the dialogue, and Finrod learns from it as well (318-19).
any upper hand in endorsing nineteenth-century capitalism over the utopia of Nowhere as Hammond describes it.

Although the dialogue between Ransom and Weston before Tinidril in *Perelandra* reflects the Renaissance mode of dialogue, Lewis also employs more Socratic dialogue elsewhere in the Cosmic Trilogy. In particular, at the end of *Out of the Silent Planet*, Ransom’s translation of Weston’s defense of his actions on Malacandra reduces Weston’s position to folly. When Weston boasts that the natives of Malacandra have “nothing to compare with our civilization— with our science, medicine and law, our armies …. Our right to supersede you is the right of the higher over the lower,” Ransom translates to the natives that “we have many bent people and we kill them or shut them in huts and … we have people for settling quarrels between the bent *hnau* about their huts and mates and things … we have many ways for the *hnau* of one land to kill those of another and some are trained to do it …. Because of all this, he says, it would not be the act of a bent *hnau* if our people killed all your people” (*Silent* 134-35). Ransom’s translation of Weston’s speech thus reveals Weston’s doublespeak and its implications in narrowing thought much as Newspeak does in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.21 Thus, Lewis ultimately employs both Platonic and Renaissance dialogue in satirizing humanity and portraying the possibility of utopia in the Cosmic Trilogy.

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21 Tolkien, whose “ruling passion was philology,” whose “fiction is certainly rooted in philology,” and who “was a philologist before he was a mythologist, and a mythologist … before he ever became a writer of fantasy fiction” (Shippey, *Tolkien* xi, xiii, xvi), shared this concern with language narrowing thought, as his appendix on the Black Speech of the Orcs demonstrates in *The Lord of the Rings*: “The Orcs … had no language of their own, but took what they could of other tongues and perverted it to their own liking; yet they made only brutal jargons, scarcely sufficient even for their own needs. Tolkien casts this Black Speech as a constructed language imposed from the top down, like Newspeak: “It is said that the Black Speech was devised by Sauron in the Dark Years, and that he desired to make it the language of all those that served him, but he failed in that purpose” (1105), much as the Appendix on Newspeak in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* being written in standard English suggests that the implementation of Newspeak was ultimately unsuccessful. Shippey also notes that Bilbo’s dialogue is often “socially coded to mean its opposite, as when … he says to the dwarves, ‘in his politest unpressing tones’, ‘I suppose you will all stay to supper?’ (which means to those who know the code, ‘you have overstayed your welcome, go away’)” (9), much as Newspeak and Oceania’s tripartite slogan codify such opposites as “War is Peace” and “Freedom is Slavery.”
The Inklings and the Modernists

Lewis’s paradigm of utopia and dystopia offers an alternative to that of Zamyatin, Huxley, and Orwell, not least insofar as they interrogate in different fashions the utopianism of Morris, Wells, and other early modernists. Lewis and Orwell in particular directly critiqued each other’s presentations of utopia and dystopia. Orwell, in a 1945 review for the *Manchester Evening News*, wrote favorably of *That Hideous Strength* in particular (“Scientists”). However, Orwell, as a secular socialist, remained skeptical of religion, and in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Goldstein’s book refers to priests as parasites of royalty and aristocracy and to religion as “promises of compensation in an imaginary world beyond the grave” (202), following Marx’s and Lenin’s famous denunciations of religion as an opiate (Marx, “Contribution”; Lenin, “Socialism”). Goldstein’s book identifies the Catholic Church in particular as an aristocratic organization, albeit an adoptive rather than hereditary one (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 209-10), following Orwell’s rejection of contemporary Catholic engagement in politics as “plainly fascist” as exemplified in the support of the Church in Spain for Franco and the Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War (Rodden 363). The nominally socialist Party of Ingsoc, or “English Socialism,” likewise proscribes religion: under torture Winston confesses to being “a religious believer” and “an admirer of capitalism” (242), though no evidence exists in the narrative of the former and Winston reflects earlier that to his knowledge “there might never have been … any such creature as a capitalist” (74-75). However, the Party itself replicates the adoptive aristocracy Goldstein describes as “the persistence of a certain world-view and a certain way of life, imposed by the dead upon the living” (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 210).\(^\text{22}\)

\(^\text{22}\) The Party’s appropriation of religious structure in Orwell thus follows Suvin’s argument that Zamyatin’s *We* “equates Leninist Communism with institutionalized Christianity” and invokes the “inevitable Fall from Eden” and
Perhaps Orwell’s strongest objection to the religious elements in *That Hideous Strength* lies in his perception of the supernatural as short-circuiting the issues at stake in such conflicts: “When one is told that God and the Devil are in conflict one always knows which side is going to win. The whole drama of the struggle against evil lies in the fact that one does not have supernatural aid” (“Scientists”). However, Lewis too cautioned against invoking angels as an easy solution to these issues. In response to Haldane’s criticism of the “‘angelocracy’ pictured on Mars,” Lewis noted that this order is “a thing of the past,” as the transfer of power from the *eldila* to Tindril and Tor on Perelandra suggests (“Reply” 101; *Perelandra* 177). Meanwhile, although Orwell found the religious elements of *That Hideous Strength* unpalatable, he appreciated “the struggle of a little group of sane people against a nightmare that nearly conquers the world,” against a “company [that] have … destroyed in themselves all human feeling, all notion of good and evil.” Moreover, Orwell cautioned, “[plenty] of people in our age do entertain the monstrous dreams of power that Mr. Lewis attributes to his characters, and we are within sight of the time when such dreams will be realisable” (“Scientists”).

Conversely, Lewis critiqued Orwell’s fiction, including both *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*. Lewis considered *Animal Farm* the superior work, lamenting that he had “met ten people who knew 1984 for one who knew Animal Farm.” Lewis recognized in *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* “two books by the same author which deal, at bottom, with the same subject. Both are very bitter, honest and honourable recantations … Since the subject concerns us all and the disillusionment has been widely shared, it is not surprising that either book, or both, should find plenty of readers, and both are obviously the works of a very considerable writer.”

“an ironical crucifixion” (257). O’Brien repeatedly invokes the paradigm of the Inquisition and the heretic in his interrogation of Winston, further bolstering this connection (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* 253-55, 268).
However, Lewis described *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as “merely a flawed, interesting book,” while he praised *Animal Farm* as “a work of genius which may well outlive the particular and (let us hope) temporary conditions that provoked it” (“Orwell” 133). Lewis argued that “the shorter book [*Animal Farm*] seems to do all that the longer one does; and more” and complained of “dead wood” in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in the form of its “anti-sexual propaganda,” which he found “distracting” (134). In *Animal Farm*, Lewis contends, the satire is “more effective”: “Wit and humour (absent from the longer work) are employed with devastating effect. The great sentence ‘All animals are equal but some are more equal than others’ bites deeper than the whole of *1984* …. [When] Orwell turns all his characters into animals he makes them more fully human. In *1984* the cruelty of the tyrants is odious, but it is not tragic; odious like a man skinning a cat alive, not tragic like the cruelty of Regan and Goneril to Lear” (135). Lewis suggests that Boxer’s death in *Animal Farm* “moves us more than all the more elaborate cruelties of the other book …. Here, despite the animal disguise, we feel we are in a real world … this is what humanity is like; very good, very bad, very pitiable, very honourable. If men were only like the people in *1984* it would hardly be [worthwhile] writing stories about them” (136). Later critics of Orwell have echoed Lewis’s favorable opinion of *Animal Farm*: M. Keith Booker argues that *Animal Farm* is “probably one of the most effective … political satires of the twentieth century” (35), and Erika Gottlieb suggests that it “is worth asking why in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* … Orwell felt it important to repeat the message of *Animal Farm*, written only five years earlier …. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* contains *Animal Farm*” (247). However, Lewis also recognizes the Appendix on Newspeak as “magnificent, and fortunately detachable” (“Orwell” 133), in keeping with his own concerns on the deterioration of language: before either *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or “Politics and the English Language” was published, Lewis had argued in “The
Death of Words” that “when, however reverently, you have killed a word you have also … blotted from the human mind the thing that word originally stood for. Men do not long continue to think what they have forgotten how to say” (141).

Although the respective fiction of Orwell and Lewis criticizes modernist conceptions of utopia from different vantage points, common themes emerge between these works. The resistance of a small, sane minority against agents of dehumanization, which Orwell identifies in his review of That Hideous Strength (“Scientists”), figures prominently in Nineteen Eighty-Four, in which the ruling Ingsoc Party of Oceania and its rivals in Eurasia and Eastasia have achieved these “monstrous dreams of power” and Winston Smith attempts to maintain his sanity in the face of this power. Winston notes that the proletarians or “proles” have retained their humanity far more effectively than the Party members, including himself (Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four 165). However, until his experiences at the Ministry of Love, Winston remains resolved to hold to truth and sanity: “Being in a minority, even a minority of one, did not make you mad. There was truth and there was untruth, and if you clung to the truth even against the whole world, you were not mad … ‘Sanity is not statistical’” (217-18). Winston looks ahead to “a world of sanity” beyond “the world of the Party” (220). This resolve lies at the heart of Winston’s interrogation, as O’Brien diagnoses Winston as “mentally deranged” and having “a defective memory” (245), as “a lunatic, a minority of one” (249). Meanwhile, the Party explicitly aims to dehumanize Winston and its other subjects, as O’Brien makes clear in the interrogation: “Never again will you be capable of ordinary human feeling. Everything will be dead inside you. Never again will you be capable of love, or friendship, or joy of living, or laughter, or curiosity, or courage, or integrity. You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves” (256). O’Brien leads Winston to question his sanity and even his self-awareness:

Both *That Hideous Strength* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* also address a concept Lewis defines as the “Inner Ring” critical to dystopian power. This Inner Ring consists of “like-minded cronies at the real control center of a group of people” (Duriez, *Bedeviled* 170). In *That Hideous Strength*, Mark Studdock’s attempts to enter the Inner Ring, first at Bracton College and then at the National Institute for Coordinated Experiments, lead to continually increasing corruption (Brown 80), demonstrating Lewis’s philosophy that “the passion for the Inner Ring is most [skillful] in making a man who is not yet a very bad man do very bad things” (“Inner” 63). Lewis described the Inner Ring as an unofficial, transitory group alongside official power structures: “You are never formally and explicitly admitted by anyone. You discover gradually, in almost indefinable ways, that it exists and that you are outside it; and then later, perhaps, that you are inside it” (56-57). Often, however, the Inner Ring “seeks to dominate everyone else—or as Tolkien might have said, to rule them all” (Brown 79). In this sense, then, the ruling Party of Oceania, for instance, explicitly codifies the Inner Ring in its hierarchy of Inner Party and Outer Party members. Furthermore, the alleged Brotherhood of resistance against the party represents an Inner Ring of its own, and O’Brien uses this Inner Ring to entice Winston into his confidence: when O’Brien obliquely refers to a recently disappeared and presumably executed colleague, “a signal, a code word … sharing a small act of thoughtcrime … had turned the two of them into accomplices” (Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* 157). Reflecting on the conversation, Winston concludes that “[the] conspiracy that he had dreamed of did exist, and he had reached the outer edges of it” (159). Enticed by an indirect invitation from O’Brien, Winston and Julia witness the opulence of the Inner Party lifestyle: “the richness and spaciousness of everything, the unfamiliar
smells of good food … the white-jacketed servants hurrying to and fro—everything was
intimidating” (168). Winston’s reading of Goldstein’s book suggests that the Party exists as a
concentric system of Inner Rings, as the Inner Party member’s luxuries “set him in a different
world from a member of the Outer Party, and the members of the Outer Party have a similar
advantage in comparison with the submerged masses whom we call ‘the proles’” (191).
According to Goldstein’s book, some “ambitious members of the Outer Party are made harmless
by allowing them to rise” into the Inner Party (209), though neither Winston nor Julia achieves
such a promotion. The alleged structure of the Brotherhood likewise reflects the Inner Ring, with
each member having only a few contacts (174).
Lewis’s view of the respective longevity of the state and the individual is also pertinent to
the power structure of the Ingsoc Party and Winston’s resistance to it. O’Brien, in interrogating
Winston, enumerates the Party’s view of reality:

Only the disciplined mind can see reality … You believe that reality is something
objective, external, existing in its own right. You also believe that the nature of reality is
self-evident … But I tell you, Winston, that reality is not external. Reality exists in the
human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes,
and in any case soon perishes; only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and
immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be truth is truth. It is impossible to see reality
except by looking through the eyes of the Party. (249)

O’Brien’s perspective thus inverts Lewis’s belief that “cultures, arts, civilizations … are mortal,
and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat” (“Weight” 15), and vice versa: according to O’Brien,
while the individual is finite and mortal, the Party is eternal. Thus, to the extent that the
perspective of O’Brien as an Inquisitor figure stands against that of Winston as a more
sympathetic Christ figure,23 both Nineteen Eighty-Four and Lewis’s Cosmic Trilogy present

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23 O’Brien’s interrogation of Winston, replete with inquisitorial allusions and culminating in an inverted image of
substitutionary atonement in which Winston begs O’Brien to torture and/or kill Julia instead, adds to this
Inquisitor/Christ dynamic.
liberal individualism as more sympathetic than authoritarian collectivism. The results of Winston’s interrogation corroborate O’Brien’s point of view, at least in the short term: by the end of the narrative, Winston “had won the victory over himself” and “loved Big Brother” (298).

Still, the appendix to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* titled “The Principles of Newspeak” complicates the matter. The appendix, written in Standard English, consistently uses past tense and occasionally the conditional perfect construction: “Newspeak was the official language of Oceania … It was expected that Newspeak would have finally superseded Oldspeak (or Standard English, as we should call it) by about the year 2050 … When Oldspeak had been once and for all superseded, the last link with the past would have been severed” (299; 311, emphases added). This combination of past tense and conditional perfect suggests the possibility of the subsequent fall of Big Brother, the Party, and Newspeak within a century of Winston’s experiences, casting doubt on O’Brien’s assertion of the Party as eternal, at least in its Oceanic iteration, though subsequent dystopian regimes remain possible. Despite Winston’s fate as an individual, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a combined unit of narrative and appendix undercuts the apparently static dystopia of the narrative by itself. Similarly, just as Zamyatin argued for the futility of the search for the last integer or the last revolution, Tolkien’s view of *Escape and Consolation* eschews the apparently static dystopia of *Huxley* and the narrative of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* exclusive of the Newspeak appendix: “Long ago Chesterton truly remarked that, as soon as he heard that anything ‘had come to stay,’ he knew that it would be very soon replaced—indeed regarded as pitiably obsolete and shabby” (“On Fairy-Stories” 148-49). This complication enhances the “ethico-political liberating qualities” theorists such as Darko Suvin seek in speculative fiction (82). Suvin argues that “ethical pathos and effect or communal (political) relevance are the obverse of aesthetic consistency” and that “[science fiction] will be the more significant and truly
relevant the more clearly it eschews final solutions, be they the static utopia of the Plato-More model [or] the more fashionable static dystopia of the Huxley-Orwell model” (82, 83).

As the Party arrogates control over reality to itself, its worldview ironically regresses to a medieval or even pre-medieval perspective. O’Brien describes the Party, including himself, as “the priests of power” and suggests that “God is power” (264). While he accuses Winston of having “nineteenth-century ideas about the laws of nature,” O’Brien begins to assert even more regressive ideas. When Winston objects that “[for] millions of years the earth was uninhabited” and that “the rocks are full of the bones of extinct animals … which lived here long before man was ever heard of,” O’Brien retorts that “[nineteenth]-century biologists invented” those fossils and that the planet “is as old as we are, no older. How could it be older? Nothing exists except through human consciousness” (265). Thus, his anthropocentrism leads him to echo the belief systems of young Earth creationists. When Winston asserts that the stars are “a million light-years away,” O’Brien argues that they are instead “bits of fire a few kilometers away,” that “[the] earth is the center of the universe,” and that “[the] sun and the stars go round it” (265). He thus posits a geocentric universe in the vein of Aristotle and Ptolemy, rejecting the findings of Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler, though he acknowledges that it is “convenient to assume” otherwise in navigation and astronomy (266). The Party thus unwittingly inverts the “chronological snobbery” against which Lewis inveighs and approaches a medieval or even pre-medieval worldview like that which Lewis examines in Discarded Image and in the Cosmic Trilogy. Because of this worldview and the ceaseless efforts of the Ministry of Truth, and the

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24 Lewis further argues that small-universe cosmology such as O’Brien argues for is in fact an inaccurate caricature of medieval astronomy, for all the limitations of the latter: “You will read in some books that the men of the Middle Ages thought the Earth flat and the stars near, but that is a lie. Ptolemy had told them that the Earth was a mathematical point without size in relation to the distance of the fixed stars” (Problem 4).
“2 + 2 = 5” of the Ministry of Love, Oceania is, as Williams described Hell, “always inaccurate”
(qtd. in Duriez, *Bedeviled* 192). O’Brien likewise draws parallels between his interrogation of
Winston and the medieval inquisitions: “Always we shall have the heretic here at our mercy,
screaming with pain, broken up, contemptible—and in the end utterly penitent, saved from
himself” (268). Meanwhile, O’Brien’s contention that Winston has “failed in humility, in self-
discipline” in setting his mind against the Party’s reality and that Winston “must humble
[himself] before [he] can become sane” recalls the condemnation of pride in Lewis and other
Inkling proponents of the Abrahamic faiths (248-49): Lewis, in *A Preface to Paradise Lost,*
conceived of Satan as “the supreme egotist” (Duriez, *Bedeviled* 192), and Williams, to whom
Lewis dedicated *Preface to Paradise Lost* (Lindop 360), suggests that “[Satan’s] effort
throughout [Paradise Lost] is to lure everyone, Eve, Adam, the angels, into that same state” (qtd.
in Duriez, *Bedeviled* 192). This paradigm further influences Tolkien’s Middle-earth legendarium:
Tolkien, like Lewis a medievalist, argues that in *The Lord of the Rings,* Sauron “desired to be a
God-King, and was held to be this by his servants; if he had been victorious he would have
demanded divine honour from all rational creatures” (*Letters* 243-44), and Sauron styles himself
“King of Kings and Lord of the World” (155). Similarly, in *The Silmarillion,* Morgoth “became
the inevitable Rebel and self-worshipper” (*Letters* 259).

As the Party attempts to control reality, it approaches a state Lewis described in *The
Abolition of Man,* which served as a partial basis for *That Hideous Strength* (*Hideous 7; “Reply”
98). That the Party’s philosophy of reality is simultaneously medieval and modernist reflects the
union of “magic and applied science”: “For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been
how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline, and
virtue. For magic and applied science alike the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of
men: the solution is a technique; and both, in the practice of this technique, are ready to do things hitherto regarded as disgusting and impious” (Abolition 52-53). Lewis’s attitude toward magic reflects his early childhood experiences and wishes to “subdue reality”: Lewis had viewed God “merely as a sort of Magician, an entity who, if requested in the proper way … would grant whatever was requested of him” and would “genie-like … then go back into his bottle until needed again, allowing life to go on as usual” (Brown 40). Lewis later cautioned against “seeing God as a divine vending machine and prayer merely as an attempt to ‘pull the right wires’” (41), and present-day Christian apologists continue to inveigh against this view of God (Ford).

Although the concept of magic in Nineteen Eighty-Four is not as explicit as are Merlin’s actions in That Hideous Strength, O’Brien’s claims for the Party’s control of reality approach the magical: “There is nothing that we could not do. Invisibility, levitation—anything. I could float off this floor like a soap bubble if I wished to. I do not wish to, because the Party does not wish it …. We make the laws of nature” (265).

The Party’s philosophy of power in Orwell likewise reflects that of the N.I.C.E. in That Hideous Strength. O’Brien tells Winston that “power is power over human beings … Power over matter—external reality, as you would call it—is not important” (264). Later, O’Brien reiterates that “[the] real power, the power we have to fight for night and day, is not power over things, but over men” (266). This equation of power reflects that of Devine, styling himself Lord Feverstone in That Hideous Strength, although Feverstone also acknowledges interplanetary travel and conquest of nature as the Institute’s other main objectives: “Man has got to take charge of Man. That means … that some men have got to take charge of the rest” (40). Colin Duriez therefore argues that although Orwell, Haldane, and other critics have dismissed value systems “that were once seen as objective, absolute or universal” as “tools used by interest groups to exert power
and authority over others,” they instead are “common to humanity and definitive to what make us human.” According to Duriez, that dehumanization frequently paves the way for oligarchy demonstrates that these values “limit, check and subvert the self-interested and self-absorbed powers that seek to subjugate human beings” (*Bedeviled* 201). Tolkien describes a similar tendency in Sauron’s dealings with the Númenóreans, as Sauron “corrupted many of the Númenóreans [and] destroyed the conception of Eru, now represented as a mere figment of the Valar or Lords of the West (a fictitious sanction to which they appealed if anyone questioned their rulings)” before inducing the king of the Númenóreans “to make the greatest of all armadas, and go up with war against the Blessed Realm itself,” causing instead the destruction of Númenór (*Letters* 205-06). The philosophy of power that the Party espouses in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* corroborates this assessment, as O’Brien dismisses any idea of power in the service of altruism as “stupid”:

> The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of others; we are interested solely in power … only power, pure power …. We are different from all the oligarchies of the past in that we know what we are doing. All the others, even those who resembled [us], were cowards and hypocrites. The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives. They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just round the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship …. The object of power is power. (263)

The Party’s use of applied science and “magic” as means to the end of power for its own sake illustrates the Faustian nature of the Party according to Lewis’s and Sayers’s understanding of the Faust narrative. Like Sayers, Lewis rejects the traditional understanding of Faust as seeking knowledge as its own end: “You will read in some critics that Faustus has a thirst for knowledge.
In reality, he hardly mentions it. It is not truth he wants from his devils, but gold and guns and girls. ‘All things that move between the quiet poles shall be at his command’ and ‘a sound magician is a mighty god’” (Abolition 53). Atwood’s study of dystopias corroborates the pragmatic objectives Lewis describes alliteratively: “[The] despotism I describe [in The Handmaid’s Tale] is the same as all real ones and most imagined ones. It has a small powerful group at the top that controls—or tries to control—everyone else, and it gets the lion’s share of available goodies. The pigs in [Orwell’s] Animal Farm get the milk and the apples, the élite of The Handmaid’s Tale get the fertile women” (“Handmaid’s” 516).

Meanwhile, the realization of the Party’s philosophy of power reflects the concepts of obedience and self-denial in Lewis’s Perelandra and The Problem of Pain (1940). O’Brien tells Winston that “one man [asserts] his power over another … by making him suffer. Obedience is not enough. Unless he is suffering, how can you be sure that he is obeying your will and not his own?” (266). O’Brien’s question lies at the heart of Tinidril’s temptation in Perelandra, in which the “Un-man” Weston tempts her to disobey Maleldil and Ransom urges her to continue to obey. Maleldil’s edict, that Tinidril not dwell overnight on a fixed land rather than on the floating islands that otherwise cover the planet Perelandra (64), does not inherently inflict suffering on her, and Ransom quips to himself that he wishes he had never seen the fixed land (84). However, the seemingly arbitrary nature of the command, which is obviously inapplicable on other worlds and in which Tinidril cannot see any inherent goodness, tests Tinidril’s obedience in the manner to which O’Brien alludes in Nineteen Eighty-Four. Weston as the Un-man posits that there is “no good” in the command: “It is mere command. It is forbidding for the mere sake of forbidding.” Weston further argues that the command is so made “[in] order that you [Tinidril] may break it” (Perelandra 100). Ransom, however, suggests that Maleldil “made one law of that kind in order
that there might be obedience. In all these other matters what you call obeying Him is but doing what seems good in your own eyes also. Is love content with that? You do them, indeed, because they are His will, but not only because they are His will. Where can you taste the joy of obeying unless He bids you do something for which His bidding is the only reason?” (*Perelandra* 101).

Tinidril agrees with Ransom, inferring that Maleldil “has given us a way to walk out of our will. And there could be no such way except a command like this” (102). Afterward, Tinidril surmises that the issues of power and control had been at the heart of the command:

> How could I wish to live there except because it was Fixed? And why should I desire the Fixed except to make sure—to be able on one day to command where I should be the next and what should happen to me? It was … to draw my hands out of Maleldil’s, to say to Him, ‘Not thus, but thus’—to put in our own power what times should roll toward us … That would have been cold love and feeble trust. (179)

The fiction of Lewis and Tolkien and the literary criticism of Lewis and his fellow Inklings thus offers an alternative vision of utopia and dystopia complementing that of Orwell, Huxley, and Zamyatin. While the Inklings worked from a theistic rather than secular worldview, common critiques of earlier utopian visions and their underlying authoritarian ramifications emerge in both bodies of literature. Moreover, the Inklings’ vision anticipates numerous dystopian developments later in the century. Issues of the nature of humanity, the potential role of the government in ameliorating or exacerbating the negative aspects of this nature, and the dangers of such intervention permeate the dystopian speculative fiction of the latter half of the twentieth century, particularly such works as Anthony Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange*. 
During the second half of the twentieth century, from the middle of the century until roughly 1980, such dystopian authors as Anthony Burgess in *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) explored many issues similar to those at the center of such earlier dystopias as *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Burgess’s dystopia continues issues of authoritarianism, individual liberty, and human nature, hence joining the conservative reaction to earlier leftist utopian optimism. Like Orwell, Lewis, and Tolkien, Burgess found the utopian impulse to entail paradoxically illiberal elements that encroached not only on the liberty but on the very existence of the individual, particularly in the wake of the rise of fascist movements and the warfare between collectivist states and nominally democratic states in the mid-twentieth century.

During the 1980s and beyond, such dystopian authors as Margaret Atwood in *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) reacted against the ascendency of politically conservative elements in the West. Atwood’s work particularly addressed issues of ideological state apparatuses and religious issues in dystopian structures. Although these political elements are ideologically distinct from both Stalinist leftism and the fascism and imperialism of the Axis powers of the Second World War, the conflict between the underlying collectivism of this political conservatism and liberal individualism underlies the conflict between protagonist and dystopian government in Atwood, much as in earlier dystopias. In Atwood, religious ideology underlies the dystopian regime of Gilead as well as individual opposition to the regime as in Lewis and, to a
degree, in John Savage’s rebellion in Huxley. Thus, while Atwood presents a conservative dystopia rather than a nominally leftist dystopia, these works demonstrate a common concern with the role of religious ideology in the conflict between individual liberalism and collective authoritarianism.

The conflicts of the early and mid-twentieth century exert a profound impact on the dystopian authors of the 1950s and 1960s, just as events earlier in the century affected earlier dystopias. George Steiner argues that “the unprecedented ruin of humane values and hopes by the political bestiality of our age” is “the starting-point of any serious thought about literature and the place of literature in society” in the postwar era:

We know now that a man can read Goethe or Rilke in the evening, that he can play Bach and Schubert, and go to his day’s work at Auschwitz in the morning. … We cannot act now, be it as critics or merely as rational beings, as if nothing of vital relevance had happened to our sense of the human possibility, as if the extermination by hunger or violence of some 70 million men, women and children in Europe and Russia between 1914 and 1945 had not altered, profoundly, the quality of our awareness. We cannot pretend that Belsen is irrelevant to the responsible life of the imagination. (187-88)

Thus, Peter Schakel suggests that the denouement of Lewis’s That Hideous Strength emphasizes “the warning that evil has not been defeated; the struggle against what the NICE [the totalitarian National Institute for Coordinated Experiments] epitomizes must continue if freedom and what we think of as civilized life are to survive” (“Oxford” 364), much as Zamyatin warned against the idea of a last revolution and Orwell expressed anxieties over the socialist revolution being betrayed by Stalinism. The British postwar dystopia of Burgess further emphasizes these

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1 Paul Crawford argues that “the kind of assumptions that buoyed the complacency of England, and indeed other Allied nations” held “that the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis were an exclusively German phenomenon” (62). Such postwar experiments as the Milgram experiment of 1963, conducted in America in the wake of the Adolf Eichmann trial, demonstrated that ordinary individuals’ willingness to torture when an authority figure so orders them was not limited to Germany.
anxieties, cautioning against a facile identification of dystopia with fascist and communist regimes that risks political complacency, chauvinism, and self-congratulation in the West.

The Inklings, Politics, and Escapism

Although the Augustinianism of Lewis, Tolkien, and the Inklings complements the dystopian analysis of More and of early utopian authors, the worldview and politics of the Inklings have remained controversial. Skeptics of Lewis, Tolkien, and the Inklings have derided the Inklings’ criticism of modernity as escapist and potentially reactionary. Jonathan Langford notes that critics such as Rosemary Jackson accuse Tolkien of “betraying a nostalgia for the past and support for ruling ideologies,” though Langford suggests that this accusation is “a pretty fundamental misreading of Tolkien, whose work actually includes a stringent critique of modern industrial practices, dehumanizing power structures, and the concept that individual good follows from blind obedience to the social order or adherence to some particular cause” (56). Tolkien wrote that he was “not a ‘democrat’ … only because ‘humility’ and equality are spiritual principles corrupted by the attempt to mechanize and formalize them, with the result that we get not universal smallness and humility, but universal greatness and pride, till some Orc gets hold of a ring of power—and then we get and are getting slavery” (qtd. in Carpenter 128). Lewis also addresses the “insinuation … that those who read or wrote [science fiction] were probably Fascists” (“On Science” 88), comparing the shift in perspective of speculative fiction to a break on the deck of a ship from a conflict below decks:

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2 Lewis proffers similar criticism of corrupted democratic principles in “Screwtape Proposes a Toast” while not opposing democracy per se. Lewis further self-identifies as a democrat and describes his reasoning for favoring democracy in his “Reply to Haldane.”
It would not necessarily change [a reader’s] convictions about the rights and wrongs of 
the dispute down below, but it would probably show them in a new light …. Hence the 
uneasiness which [speculative fiction] arouse[s] in those who, for whatever reason, wish 
to keep us wholly imprisoned in the immediate conflict. That perhaps is why people are 
so ready with the charge of “escape” …. I never fully understood it till my friend 
Professor Tolkien asked me the very simple question, “What class of men would you 
expect to be most preoccupied with, and most hostile to, the idea of escape?” and gave 
the obvious answer: jailers. … But there is perhaps this truth behind it: that those who 
brood much on the remote past or future, or stare long at the night sky, are less likely than 
others to be ardent or orthodox partisans. (89)

This critique of charges of escapism further underlies Lewis’s Narnia volume The Silver Chair, 
in which the Green Witch attempts to convince the protagonists, in an attempt to coerce them to 
serve her, that the surface world outside her subterranean realm, from which they have arrived to 
confront her, is only a figment of their imaginations (629-33).

Tolkien, whom Lewis credits with influencing his critique of escapism, responded at 
length to these charges of escapism and, parenthetically, to any insinuation of sympathy with 
fascism:

I do not accept the tone of scorn or pity with which “Escape” is now so often used: a tone 
for which the uses of the word outside literary criticism give no warrant at all. … Why 
should a man be scorned, if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home? Or if, 
when he cannot do so, he thinks and talks about other topics than jailers and prison-
walls? The world outside has not become less real because the prisoner cannot see it. In 
using Escape in this way the critics have chosen the wrong word, and, what is more, they 
are confusing, not always by sincere error, the Escape of the Prisoner with the Flight of 
the Deserter. Just so a Party-spokesman might have labelled departure from the misery of 
the Führer’s or any other Reich and even criticism of it as treachery. (“On Fairy-Stories” 
148)

While critics such as Kathryn Hume identify Tolkien with “the politically conservative writers of 
science fiction, in whose works the adventures serve to uphold the status quo of a benign

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3 Lewis’s “down below” here refers to a metaphor of striking stewards aboard a passenger ship. Lewis argues that limits exist to the significance of economic and class conflicts: “a breather on deck,” to which Lewis likens quality speculative fiction, would remind someone on the ship that “the stewards were taking for granted hopes more momentous than that of a rise in pay, and the passengers forgetting dangers more serious than that of having to cook and serve their own meals” (88-89).
technological elite” (45), Tolkien points to the authoritarianism of critics of escapism, suggesting that they “would seem to prefer the acquiescence of the ‘quisling’ to the resistance of the patriot” (qtd. in Hume 68). Shippey points out that Tolkien “was satisfying a taste—the taste for fairy-tale—which is natural to us, which goes back as far as we have written records of any sort, to the Old Testament and Homer’s Odyssey, and which is found in all human societies. If our arbiters of taste insist that this taste should be suppressed, then it is they who are flying from reality” (xxv). Meanwhile, Hume, citing Tolkien’s “On Fairy Story,” suggests that “the illusions of escape literature offer possible benefits … they encourage belief in the possibility of meaningful action. They deny that the individual is worthless, a negligible statistic. Even at lowest valuation, this reassurance has psychological value, for people who cannot believe in themselves have trouble engaging themselves with life in any fashion” (68).

Likewise, critics level such political criticism to authors of speculative fiction and utopia far to the left of Lewis and Tolkien, suggesting that this criticism may indicate more about the critics themselves than about their targets. Orwell, who “was shot through the throat by a fascist sniper” fighting on behalf of socialism in the Spanish Civil War, after the ascent of Stalinism in Spain “had to run for his life, in danger of being thrown in jail, tortured, and executed by those who were, ideologically, the most obvious enemies of fascism.” As Erika Gottlieb points out, Orwell penned Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four as well as such other works as Homage to Catalonia, “Spilling the Spanish Beans,” and “Looking Back on the Spanish War” out of “a deeply felt moral commitment to the cause of socialism, combined with the bitter recognition that it is thwarted, deliberately betrayed by the Stalinists, and that this betrayal is denied or simply overlooked by Stalin’s duped western followers” (242–43). Orwell maintained that “just as the Russian Revolution against the exploiter was fully justified, so the animals on Manor Farm
are fully justified in overthrowing their cruel human master and in establishing Animal Farm” (244), but he argued as well that “the destruction of the Soviet myth was essential if we wanted a revival of the Socialist movement” (qtd. in Gottlieb 247). Thus, a reflexive rejection of speculative fiction, utopia, or dystopia as conservative or fascist, as in the case of the dystopia of an author with such well-established socialist credentials as Orwell, obscures similar, even if potentially more legitimate, charges against other authors.

Tolkien’s experience attempting to publish a translation of *The Hobbit* in Nazi Germany exemplifies his attitude toward fascism. When Tolkien was asked by prospective publishers if he was of “arisch” or “Aryan” descent, Tolkien complained to publisher Stanley Unwin that the question was an “impertinence” and castigated any legal requirement attached thereto as “lunatic laws”:

> Personally I should be inclined to refuse … and let a German translation go hang. In any case I should object strongly to any such declaration appearing in print. I do not regard the (probable) absence of all Jewish blood as necessarily honourable; and I … should regret giving any colour to the notion that I subscribed to the wholly pernicious and unscientific race-doctrine. ([*Letters* 37])

Tolkien repeated this sentiment in his letter directly to the prospective German publishers, while educating them on Nazi racial theorists’ misappropriation of the term *Aryan*:

> I am not of *Aryan* extraction: that is Indo-[Iranian]; as far as I am aware none of my ancestors spoke Hindustani, Persian, Gypsy, or any related dialects. But if I am to understand that you are enquiring whether I am of *Jewish* origin, I can only reply that I regret that I appear to have *no* ancestors of that gifted people. … I have been accustomed, nonetheless, to regard my German name with pride, and continued to do so throughout the period of the late regrettable war, in which I served in the English army. I cannot, however, forbear to comment that if impertinent and irrelevant inquiries of this sort are to become the rule in matters of literature, then the time is not far distant when a German name will no longer be a source of pride.4

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4 Tolkien’s ancestors, who then spelled their surname *Tolkiehn*, were from Saxony, and Germany had been “the cradle of Anglo-Saxon culture” (Garth 42).
Your enquiry is doubtless made in order to comply with the laws of your own country, but that this should be held to apply to the subjects of another state would be improper, even if it had (as it has not) any bearing whatsoever on the merits of my work or its suitability for publication. (*Letters* 37-38)

The experiences of Tolkien, Lewis, and other authors of fantasy and speculative fiction in such conflicts as the World Wars also demonstrate the speciousness of the charges of escapism leveled against them. As Tolkien biographer Tom Shippey asserts,

[So] many of the originators of the later twentieth-century fantastic mode … (Tolkien, Orwell, Golding, Vonnegut) are combat veterans, present at or at least deeply involved in the most traumatically significant events of the century, such as the Battle of the Somme (Tolkien), the bombing of Dresden (Vonnegut), [and] the rise and early victory of fascism (Orwell). Nor can anyone say that they turned their backs on these events. Rather, they had to find some way of communicating and commenting on them. (*Tolkien* viii)

Shippey notes to the contrary that these authors’ ‘very different but related experiences left all of them … with an underlying problem. They were bone-deep convinced that they had come into contact with something irrevocably evil. They also … felt that the explanations for this which they were given by the official organs of their culture were hopelessly inadequate, out of date, at best irrelevant, at worst part of the evil itself.” Orwell, for instance, “returned from Spain to find his own personal experience, including being shot, dismissed as a non-event, a political aberration” (xxx), much as O’Brien dismisses Winston’s experiences as non-events and Winston himself as nonexistent. Tolkien points out also that many “stories out of the past have only become ‘escapist’ in their appeal through surviving from a time when men were as a rule delighted with the work of their hands into our time when many men feel disgust with man-made things” (“On Fairy-Stories” 151). Tolkien’s description of these changing times corroborates that of Samuel Butler and William Morris as well as that of Marx and Engels:

Owing to the extensive use of machinery, and to the division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the
workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. ... Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine. (Manifesto 27, 28)

Moreover, Shippey points out Tolkien’s disdain for the bourgeois enterprise of bookselling:

It is in fact hard to think of a work (except perhaps in their different ways The Silmarillion and Finnegans Wake) written with less concern for commercial considerations than The Lord of the Rings. No market researcher in the 1950s could possibly have predicted its success. It was long, difficult, trailed with appendices, studded with quotations in unknown languages which the author did not always translate, and utterly strange. (xxiv)

As a result, Shippey suggests, “One can only marvel, looking back, on the boldness and determination of Sir Stanley Unwin in publishing it at all—though significantly enough, he hedged his bet by entering into a profit-sharing agreement with Tolkien by which Tolkien got nothing till there were some profits to share, a matter clearly of some doubt at the time” (xviii).

Like Tolkien, Lewis faced allegations of being reactionary. J. B. S. Haldane, for instance, condemned Lewis as “‘a most useful prop to the existing social order’ ... dear to those who ‘stand to lose by social changes’ and reluctant, for bad motives, to speak out about usury” (qtd. in “Reply” 98). Lewis suggests that in Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings, such readings reflect the critics’ biases rather than the work itself: “What shows that we are reading myth, not allegory, is that there are no pointers to a specifically theological, or political, or psychological application.

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5 Lewis’s actual position on interest and usury, as he articulates it in Mere Christianity, is more complex and at best ambivalent: “There is one bit of advice given to us by the ancient heathen Greeks, and by the Jews in the Old Testament, and by the great Christian teachers of the Middle Ages, which the modern economic system has completely disobeyed. All these people told us not to lend money at interest: and lending money at interest — what we call investment — is the basis of our whole system.” While Lewis makes no categorical judgments on the overall ethics and effects of capitalism, he recognizes a tension in ethics between earlier attitudes toward usury and interest and those of the contemporary capitalist system: “I am not an economist and I simply do not know whether the investment system is responsible for the state we are in or not. ... But I should not have been honest if I had not told you that three great civilizations had agreed (or so it seems at first sight) in condemning the very thing on which we have based our whole life” (81-82).
A myth points, for each reader, to the realm he [or she] lives in most. It is a master key; use it on what door you like” (“Tolkien’s” 115). In particular, Lewis, to whom Tolkien had read from early drafts of *Lord of the Rings* (Duriez, *Bedeviled* 57-61; Brown 174), cautions against identifying elements of *Lord of the Rings* with later mid-twentieth century developments, describing these conflations as “not only erroneous, but … chronologically impossible” (“On Criticism” 169):

[When] he hears that some people want to identify the Ring with the hydrogen bomb, and Mordor with Russia, I think he might call it a “hasty” word. … When Professor Tolkien began there was probably no nuclear fission and the contemporary incarnation of Mordor was a good deal nearer our shores [i.e., Nazi Germany]. But the text itself teaches that Sauron is eternal; the war of the Ring is only one of a thousand wars against him. Every time we shall be wise to fear his ultimate victory. … Every time we win we win we shall know that our victory is impermanent. If we insist on asking for the moral of the story, that is its moral: a recall from facile optimism and wailing pessimism alike, to that hard, yet not quite desperate, insight into Man’s unchanging predicament by which heroic ages have lived. (“Tolkien’s” 119)⁶

According to Lewis, the events of *The Lord of the Rings* “were not devised to reflect any particular situation in the real world. It was the other way round; real events began, horribly, to conform to the pattern he [Tolkien] had freely invented” (qtd. in Carpenter 190). Lewis recognizes that of “a book’s meaning … its author is not necessarily the best, and is never a perfect, judge”; even so, he argues, where criticism “seems to me most often to go wrong is in the hasty assumption of an allegorical sense. … [No] story can be devised by the wit of man which cannot be interpreted allegorically by the wit of some other man. … We ought not to proceed to [allegorize] any work until we have plainly set out the reasons for regarding it as an

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⁶ Hume likewise admits that “the attempts to read ‘the bomb’ into ‘the ring’ have not been persuasive”; however, she argues, contra the indelible effects of the narrative on Frodo, Bilbo, Boromir, Theoden, and others, that the “ineffectuality of the evil” renders the heroism of the book cheap and less meaningful (47).
allegory at all” (“On Criticism” 178-79). However, on a broader level, Lewis suggests that the significance of fantasy and science fiction is not in spite of but because of their speculative nature: “The value of the myth is that it takes all the things we know and restores to them the rich significance which has been hidden by ‘the veil of familiarity’” (“Tolkien’s” 120).

Tolkien’s use of aspects of children’s literature is particularly relevant to allegations of wish-fulfillment in the fantasy genre in general and in his own work in particular. Langford argues that readers of Lord of the Rings “will more likely identify with the more childlike Sam or Frodo than with Aragorn, making the tale less one of identification with a fantastic hero than a coming-of-age story,” contra the interpretation of such critics as Kathryn Hume of readers’ “dubious identification with the larger-than-life hero Aragorn” (Langford 59; cf. Hume 66, 194-95), rather than with the “high mimetic” Frodo or even the “low mimetic” Bilbo (Hume 154). These characters, Shippey suggests, help Tolkien’s readers “realize that they too have a birthright in Middle-earth, need not be totally cut off from it (even if orthodox literary history has tried to assert that they are)” (48). Lewis’s definition of myth further undercuts the question of identification entirely, as Lewis suggests that an essential characteristic of myth is that its readers or listeners “only observe the characters rather than identify with them, as in most stories, because ‘they are like shapes moving in another world’” (Sammons 132). Lewis

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7 Lewis similarly described encountering the scholarly study of his own works in a conversation with Kingsley Amis and Brian Aldiss: “You’ve probably reached the stage too of having theses written on yourself. I received a letter from an American examiner asking, ‘Is it true that you meant this and this and this?’ A writer of a thesis was attributing to me views which I have explicitly contradicted in the plainest possible English. They’d be much wiser to write about the dead, who can’t answer” (“Unreal” 189).

8 The penultimate chapter of The Lord of the Rings, “The Scouring of the Shire,” in which the hobbits confront and defeat Saruman and his followers without the aid of such “big folk” as Aragorn and Gandalf (974, 992, 996-97), corroborates Langford’s reading over Hume’s, although Hume argues that “the quasi-industrial damage done to the Shire is quickly rectified” (47). The industrialization and commercialization of the Shire in the absence of Frodo and company further critiques extremes of authoritarianism, mechanization, bureaucracy, and capitalism (975-79, 989-90), and as early as The Hobbit (1937), Thorin tells Bilbo, “If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world” (290).
meanwhile argues that such wish fulfillment is not unique to speculative fiction and is in fact more pernicious in realistic fiction:

We long to go through the looking glass, to reach fairy land. We also long to be the immensely popular and successful schoolboy or schoolgirl. . . . But the two longings are very different. The second, especially when directed on something so close as school life, is ravenous and deadly serious. Its fulfilment on the level of imagination is in very truth compensatory: we run to it from the disappointments and humiliations of the real world: it sends us back to the real world undivinely discontented. For it is all flattery to the ego. The pleasure consists in picturing oneself the object of admiration. ("On Three" 64)

Lewis suggests that these two categories of fiction offer completely different reading experiences: “the boy reading the school story . . . desires success and is unhappy (once the book is over) because he can’t get it: the boy reading the fairy tale desires and is happy in the very fact of desiring” (65). Tolkien similarly argues that fairy-stories are “plainly not primarily concerned with possibility, but with desirability. If they awakened desire, satisfying it while often whetting it unbearably, they succeeded” (“On Fairy-Stories” 134).

Thus, critical dismissal of the Inklings’ works as quietist, escapist, or reactionary fails to address the complexity of these works in addressing the evils and inequity of contemporary society and endorsing individual activism rather than either “facile optimism” or “wailing pessimism.”

Burgess, Pelagius, and Augustine: A Clockwork Orange

A skeptical attitude toward human nature underlies A Clockwork Orange in much the same way as it does the works of Lewis, Tolkien, and others. Burgess once suggested that “the wrong God is temporarily ruling the world and that the true God has gone under” (Cullinan 44), corroborating Lewis’s imagery of a rebel-held world in such works as Silent Planet and Mere Christianity (Mere 51). Burgess, who shares a Catholic background with Tolkien, consistently
explores issues of theology and human nature. John J. Stinson argues that Burgess was “supersaturated with” Catholicism (Burgess 2). Burgess described his novels as “mediaeval Catholic in their thinking” (Cullinan 42). Burgess argues that English Catholics in particular “take our Catholicism seriously … and that makes us earnest and obsessed about sin” (43). Thus, although Burgess was himself a “lapsed Catholic” (Robert Morris 1), for Burgess, “the idea of free will … is not just half-baked existentialism, it’s an old Catholic theme” (qtd. in Kennard 64), and Burgess’s belief “that there is a permanent and universal essence to man” follows from a Catholic perspective on humanity (Kennard 65). Moreover, Alex’s macabre interpretation of the Bible reflects Catholic skepticism toward the Protestant doctrine of sola scriptura and the potential misinterpretation of scripture:

I would read of these starry yahoodies tolchocking each other and then peeting their Hebrew vino and getting on to the bed with their wives’ like handmaidens, real horrorshow. That kept me going, brothers. I didn’t so much kopat the later part of the book, which is more like all preachy govoreeting than fighting and the old in-out. … I read all about the scourging and the crowning with thorns and then the cross vesch and all that cal. … I closed my glazzies and viddied myself helping in and even taking charge of the tolchocking and the nailing in, being dressed in a like toga that was the height of Roman fashion. (Clockwork 53-54)9

Burgess further complained of “a West drained, thanks to the Second Vatican Council, of solid and belligerent belief” (1985 61), anticipating the “belligerent belief” of later dystopian regimes such as Gilead in Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale.

The conflict between Pelagian and orthodox Augustinian views of human nature is a particular concern throughout Burgess’s works. Geoffrey Aggeler describes this theme as

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9 Alex continues to interpret the Bible thus even after the Ludovico therapy and his release from prison, with the result that these same passages trigger his conditioning: “I … took down the big book or Bible, as it was called, thinking that might give me like comfort as it had done in the old Staja days … and I staggered over to a chair to read in it. But all I found was about smiting seventy times seven and a lot of Jews cursing and tolchocking each other, and that made me want to sick, too” (93).
“ubiquitous” in Burgess (9); meanwhile, Stinson describes it as the “central, perhaps too insistent and oft-repeated conflict in Burgess” (Burgess 21). The optimistic Pelagian view, in which humanity is capable of perfecting itself, was rejected by the Catholic Church as heretical, but it, or a secularized version of it, underlies early modernist utopians such as Morris and Wells (Stinson, Burgess 21; Burgess, 1985 55). According to Aggeler, Pelagianism is responsible for “the two big modern heresies—material progress as a sacred goal [and] the State as God Almighty,” leading respectively to “Americanism” and “the Socialist process.” Aggeler suggests that Burgess presents the history of government in *The Wanting Seed* (1962) as “an oscillation between Pelagian and Augustinian philosophies”:

> When a government is functioning in its Pelagian phase … it is socialistic and committed to a Wellsian liberal belief in man and his ability to achieve perfection through his own efforts. Inevitably man fails to fulfill the liberal expectation, and the ensuing “disappointment” causes a chaotic “Interphase,” during which terrorist police strive to maintain order by force and brutality. Finally, the government, appalled by its own excesses, lessens the brutality but continues to enforce its will on the citizenry on the [Augustinian] assumption that man is an inherently sinful creature from whom no good may be expected. … [There] is a capitalist economy but very little real freedom for the individual. (9)\(^{10}\)

These three phases roughly correspond to the optimism of *News from Nowhere* and *A Modern Utopia*, the totalitarianism of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and the incrementally less totalitarian authoritarianism of *A Clockwork Orange*. Burgess, identifying liberal utopianism with Pelagianism, argues that Wells “died a disappointed liberal” while “Orwell exhibits the sickness of a disillusioned liberal” (qtd. in Stinson, Burgess 47). Aggeler concludes that “a Godless society which accepts Augustine’s view of unregenerate human nature is apt to be a Fascist dictatorship” (9).

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\(^{10}\) William H. Pritchard argues that *The Wanting Seed* and *A Clockwork Orange*, along with Burgess’s *Honey for the Bears* (1963) “ask to be considered together. All of them concern the individual and the modern state … they approach life obliquely by creating fantasies or fables which appeal to us in odd and disturbing ways” (20).
While Alex’s heterodox interpretation of scripture suggests skepticism toward liberal individual-oriented faith, Burgess’s criticism largely concerns Pelagianism and Augustinianism at the community level. Such critics as Michael Rudick have agreed that “Burgess is … characteristically harsher on the Pelagian optimists and social engineers than on the believers in original sin. Pelagians make better satiric targets because their posturings are so much more ridiculous and their exploitations entail denying possibilities of individual human value” (111-12). Burgess, who noted that Pelagius was a British monk (1985 55), described Pelagianism as “the British Heresy” and identified its belief in human perfectibility as being “at the heart of liberalism and its derived doctrines, especially Socialism and Communism” (Wanting 9-10).

Liberalism thus “tends to deny the existence of real evil as an entity or as an active agency in the world. What is generally considered ‘evil’ … is merely the effect of some combination of ignorance, superstition, mistrust, and adherence to outmoded conventions” (Stinson, Burgess 21). Burgess argued that this conflict between Pelagian and Augustinian views of humanity lies at the heart of the utopia/dystopia dilemma and is central to earlier dystopian authors such as Zamyatin and Orwell: “As Zamyatin reminds us, Adam did not wish to be happy; he wished to be ‘free.’ … He did not realize that, once free, he was more likely to choose the wrong than the right” (1985 55-56). Stinson thus describes Burgess as having “an artistically earned Christian pessimism” that “invites the reader to see the old Adam everywhere” (“Manichee” 58). Although modern sociopolitical commentators and critics of utopia and dystopia less frequently cast the conflict in such theological terms, the conflict remains, according to Burgess:

In secularizing these views of man, we tend to forget about sin and concentrate on what is good for society and what is not. The Wellsian brand of Pelagianism blamed criminal impulses on environment. What priests called “original sin” was a reaction to poverty, slum tenements, enforced ignorance and squalor. A scientific socialism would extirpate what was called crime. … The polarity is, however, not all that rigid. We are all both
Pelagian and Augustinian, either in cyclical phases, or, through a kind of doublethink, at one and the same time. Orwell was Pelagian in that he was a Socialist, Augustinian in that he created Ingsoc. (56-57)

Moreover, according to Burgess, Orwell was Augustinian as regards the State but Pelagian as regards the individual: Orwell “could see the possibility of evil only in the State. Evil was not for the individual: original sin was a doctrine to be derided. Orwell’s Socialism permitted, even insisted, that man should be capable of moral as well as economic improvement. His Augustinian pessimism only applied to that projection of man known as the oligarchical State” (60). Burgess, however, recognizes the possibility of individuals and groups attacking the freedom of others and the resulting juxtaposition of “pressurizable governments aware of their weakness, and yet increasing loss of liberty” (239). Burgess further identified the Pavlovian conditioning of *Brave New World* as “the ultimate Pelagianism” (87).¹¹ For his own part, Burgess’s Augustinianism transcends loyalty to or criticism of any single political system: his visit to Leningrad “strongly reinforced in Burgess’s mind that humanity is all of a piece, East or West, Communist or capitalist” (Stinson, *Burgess* 36).

Because *A Clockwork Orange* was initially published without its twenty-first and final chapter, the differing editions of *A Clockwork Orange* further replicate this conflict between Pelagianism and Augustinianism. Andrew Biswell suggests that “the twentieth chapter reveals itself to be an Augustinian conclusion” in that “Alex has been ‘cured’ … but not saved” (200), while in the twenty-first chapter, “Alex acknowledges his potential for goodness autonomously,

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¹¹ Burgess suggests that this conditioning is used in Huxley to make “infants of the lowest social group … hate the consumer goods they can never afford to buy … the children will hate toys. In the same way, in maturity, they can be made to loathe champagne and caviar-surrogate” (88). This conditioning would reinforce class consciousness. However, the process as Burgess describes it differs significantly from its depiction in *Brave New World* itself. In Huxley, the children are conditioned to hate books and nature precisely because enjoying those things requires minimal consumption (31); thus, conditioning them to dislike toys, beverages, or food would be counterproductive.
without the direct intervention of divine grace. … For this reason, the twenty-first chapter is a Pelagian conclusion” (201). However, John Tilton argues that the twenty-one chapter version is similarly Augustinian: the doctors and Alexander are “destined to commit ultimate evils because they have no awareness of their own capacity for evil,” while Alex “supposes that he is free to choose either good or evil, as if he could be one or the other” and in the twenty-first chapter “is equally deluded in his belief that he has chosen to be good, assuming that he can put his evil self behind him forever” (41). Robert Martin Adams thus infers that in the twenty-chapter edition the “‘brothers’ to whom the story is recited are never identified, but we are bound to assume they are a new set of droogs of whom Alex, now a casehardened pro, has become or will become the leader. Droogery is thus unrebuked, even triumphant” (98). Stinson suggests that the “truncated version, closing with a view of unregenerate human evil, would be a more fitting conclusion for a William Golding novel. With his own ending, Burgess implies a more nearly equal tug from the Pelagian and Augustinian poles” (Burgess 59). Tilton further suggests that the “true climax [precludes] both self-congratulation and the simplistic formulation of isolable themes, [and] it distresses the reader into disturbing reflections on [human] nature” (24), as Burgess “has attempted to confront readers with their own worst selves, to force them to agonize over their inevitable failure to be what they ought to be … because men all have a capacity for evil” (33). Robert Morris thus concludes that A Clockwork Orange “shows refinements even beyond 1984 … if 1984 is grimly conclusive in showing the death of a mind and heart at the hands of the state, A Clockwork Orange is equally effective in questioning the finality of the death” (73).

The state in A Clockwork Orange further exhibits a preoccupation with therapy, much like that of the Party in Orwell and that of the N.I.C.E. in Lewis. The doctors responsible for Alex’s Ludovico therapy, like their counterparts in Lewis’s N.I.C.E., are “sinister scientists with
the power to wind a person’s very instincts contrariwise” (Chew 257). Moreover, in supporting this conditioning, the preaching of the prison chaplain in A Clockwork Orange foregrounds the danger of religion being employed as an ideological state apparatus (54-55). The chaplain speaks against the Ludovico program when Alex first expresses interest in it: “The question is whether such a technique can really make a man good. Goodness comes from within, 6655321 [Alex]. Goodness is something chosen. When a man cannot choose he ceases to be a man” (56).

Initially, the chaplain further notes that his objections are likely to be ignored, rationalizing his abdication of any opportunity to confront the unethical acts of the government: “this is nothing to do with me. Were it expedient, I would protest about it, but it is not expedient. There is the question of my own career, there is the question of the weakness of my own voice when set against the shout of certain more powerful elements in the polity.” Nevertheless, the chaplain recognizes the tension between a perfect society and a free society that Berdyaev recognized decades earlier:

“Very hard ethical questions are involved … I know I shall have many sleepless nights about this. What does God want? Does God want goodness or the choice of goodness? Is a man who chooses the bad perhaps in some way better than a man who has the good imposed on him? … And yet, in a sense, in choosing to be deprived of the ability to make an ethical choice, you have in a sense really chosen the good. So I shall like to think. So, God help us all, 6655321, I shall like to think.” (63)

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12 The chaplain’s reference to Alex and other prisoners by number rather than name recalls the elimination of proper names in favor of numbers or alphanumeric designations in Zamyatin and elsewhere. That Zamyatin and other authors thus extend the prison environment throughout society underscores the significance of Tolkien’s and Lewis’s remarks concerning escapism and jailers. Burgess notes that both the Czarists in 1906 and the Bolsheviks in 1922 imprisoned Zamyatin in “a cell on the same corridor of the same prison” (1985 53).

13 Jean E. Kennard points out the irony that the chaplain “has always treated Alex as a thing anyway, calling him 6655321, his prison number” (67).

14 Dr. Branom similarly offers Alex “a like very droogy and sympathetic type smile as though he had nothing to do with all this veshch but was like forced into it as I was” (70), suggesting a similar abdication of moral complicity in evil.
Accordingly, although the treatment leaves Alex with the “feeling that it was better to get the hit than give it … I might even have like presented the other cheek” (79), the chaplain finally voices his objections to those in power: “He has no real choice, has he? Self-interest, fear of physical pain, drove him to that grotesque act of self-abasement. Its insincerity was clearly to be seen. He ceases to be a wrongdoer. He ceases also to be a creature capable of moral choice.” Although Dr. Brodsky asserts that Alex “will be your true Christian … ready to turn the other cheek, ready to be crucified rather than crucify,” the chaplain finally surmises that “it works all right, God help the lot of us” (82-84), and he ultimately resigns in protest to preach against the government’s abuses (109). The chaplain is thus “the only character within the novel who honestly questions the morality of this application of behavioral science” (Petix 130). According to Burgess, this process is “a double sin” in that it “has destroyed a human being, since humanity is defined by freedom or moral choice.” Moreover, “the gates of heaven are closed to the boy, since music is a figure of celestial bliss”; thus, the government “has also destroyed an angel” (qtd. in Ray 133).

Critics similarly identify behaviorism in such works as Lewis’s Cosmic Trilogy, particularly the workings of the N.I.C.E. Haldane complained that Lewis’s characters are “like slugs in an experimental cage who get a cabbage if they turn right and an electric shock if they turn left” (qtd. in Lewis, “Reply” 97). Lewis took this criticism seriously:

I think … he suspects me of finding the sanctions of conduct in reward and punishment. His suspicion is erroneous. I share his detestation for any such view. … Although I believe in an omnipotent God I do not consider that His omnipotence could in itself create the least obligation to obey Him. … There are, on [Haldane’s] side as well as on

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15 Samuel McCracken argues, however, that the chaplain “is in error as to the theory, for he equates freedom of choice with freedom *simpliciter* … the charlie has confused freedom and license. One can almost hear him saying: ‘But the law against murder, with its horrid penalties, deprives him of freedom. The insincerity of his not murdering is obvious, motivated by self-interest. He has no real choice’” (277-78). McCracken argues that “free *choice* is diminished for everyone, by everyone; it is diminished whenever the State makes a law … totalitarian law forbids much that is desirable to forbid, as well as much that is not” (278).
mine, Vichy-like vermin who define the right side as the side that is going to win. Let us put them out of the room before we begin talking. ("Reply" 97-98)

Lewis thus rejects the worship of power that such characters as O’Brien in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* advocate. The dystopian experiments in Orwell, Lewis, and Burgess reflect the argument of Hannah Arendt that “the concentration camps … fulfill the function of laboratories in the experience of total domination” (qtd. in Gottlieb 250). Burgess argued that the “wish to diminish free will is … the sin against the Holy Ghost” (“Review” 141), much as Lewis inveighed against the attempt to create “Men without Chests” in *Abolition of Man* (21).16 Aggeler similarly argues that *A Clockwork Orange* serves as a “sermon on choice” suggesting that “the modern state has no right to tamper with human nature and reduce man to a well-behaved mechanism.” According to Aggeler, the twenty-first chapter in particular shows that “if there is any hope for man, it is in the capacity of individuals to grow and learn by suffering and error. Suffering, fallen human beings, not behavioral technology or the revolutionary schemes of idealists, bring ‘goodness’ into the world” (8). Thus, although Alex’s interpretation of the Bible complicates an unreserved endorsement of individual spiritual and theological inquiry, institutional religion such as that of the prison chaplain and its complicity in the Ludovico therapy are as or more problematic.

Burgess’s criticism of Orwell, corroborating much of Lewis’s criticism of socialism, underlies much of *A Clockwork Orange*. Burgess rejects the argument of O’Brien in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that power is an end in itself:

> We all know that no politician, statesman or dictator seeks power for its own sake …. Power is a position, a point, an eminence, a situation of control which, when total, confers pleasures which are the reward of the power—the pleasure of choosing to be feared or loved, to do harm or good, condemn or reprieve, tyrannize or bestow benefits.

16 Within the narrative, *A Clockwork Orange* takes its title from the manuscript of a writer whose house Alex and his accomplices invade. Alex reads part of the manuscript, in which the writer criticizes the “attempt to impose upon man, a creature of growth and capable of sweetness … laws and conditions appropriate to a mechanical creation” (*Clockwork* 18-19).
We recognize power when we see a capacity for choice unqualified by exterior factors. When authority is expressed solely through doing evil, then we doubt the existence of choice and hence the existence of power. (1985 49)

This philosophy of power largely reflects that of Lewis that power is the ever-changing “passport to all these prizes,” that the passport can take various forms (money, position, etc.), but that the prizes themselves do not change (“Reply” 103).

Meanwhile, Burgess shared the appreciation of Lewis and Tolkien for the mythopoeic. Burgess expressed interest in “what structuralism can teach us about myth. … Existing myths carry useful depth, a profundity of meaning which saves the novelist a lot of inventive trouble” (50). Moreover, Alex’s attitude toward goodness and badness corroborates elements from Lewis’s writings. A Clockwork Orange shares Miltonian influences with Perelandra and other writings of Lewis: “In his dual role of villain and victim, Alex resembles Milton’s Satan” (Chew 257). Petix argues that Burgess “advocates a pure dualism” and envisions a “highly Manichaean and dualistic world for most of his principal settings,” including that of Clockwork Orange (128-29). Alex in particular opines that “this [anxiety] over what is the cause of badness is what turns me into a fine laughing malchick. They don’t go into what is the cause of goodness, so why of the other shop?” (Clockwork 29). Lewis similarly notes this one-sidedness in Mere Christianity: “it is only for our bad behaviour that we find all these explanations … we put our good temper down to ourselves” (21). That Alex refers to evil as “the other shop” and his own misdeeds as “patronizing the other shop” follows Lewis’s deconstruction of the nature of dualistic notions of good and evil (Clockwork 29):

Each [dualistic power or “shop”] presumably thinks it is good and thinks the other bad. One of them likes hatred and cruelty, the other likes love and mercy, and each backs its own view. … Either we are merely saying that we happen to prefer the one to the other—like preferring beer to cider—or else we are saying that, whatever the two powers think about it, and whichever we humans, at the moment, happen to like, one of them is
actually wrong, actually mistaken, in regarding itself as good. … But the moment you say that, you are putting into the universe a third thing in addition to the two Powers … farther back and higher up than either of them. (Mere 49)\textsuperscript{17}

Thus, Burgess’s explicit integration of an Augustinian Catholic worldview into his literary criticism and into \textit{A Clockwork Orange} results in a dystopia synthesizing many elements of earlier socialist utopia and dystopia with the spiritual, political, and social concerns of such other authors as Lewis and Tolkien, applying to the dystopian genre the worldview elements that permeate Lewis and Tolkien’s other forms of speculative fiction, literary analysis, and correspondence.

\textbf{Atwood and The Handmaid’s Tale: Feminist Dystopia}

Margaret Atwood’s \textit{The Handmaid’s Tale} (1985) represents a break from previous utopias and dystopias in presenting dystopia from a feminist perspective. While “dystopian attacks on the premises of the traditional utopia rarely avoid a reinscription of the utopian suppression of the female” and often effect “an erasure of the feminine” (Ferns 176), Atwood shifts the focus to a female protagonist, Offred, née June.\textsuperscript{18} Shaffer notes that the name \textit{Offred}, a

\textsuperscript{17} Tolkien addresses dualism similarly in “\textit{Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth}”: “still many Men perceive the world as only a war between Light and Dark equipotent. But … that is Manwë and Melkor; Eru is above them …. Eru is One, alone without peer, and He made Eä, and is beyond it” (\textit{Morgoth’s} 321).

\textsuperscript{18} Although “the lack of a confirmed original name indicates another stripping of her identity” (Macpherson 56), Offred clandestinely maintains her pre-Gilead identity as an avenue of subversion, and she leaves clues to this identity throughout the narrative. “My name isn’t Offred, I have another name, which nobody uses now because it’s forbidden. … I keep the knowledge of this name like something hidden, some treasure I’ll come back to dig up, one day. I think of this name as buried. This name has an aura around it, like an amulet, some charm that’s survived from an unimaginably distant past” (\textit{Handmaid’s} 108). This practice allows her to “maintain her existence” and “regenerate … her creative energy” (Staels 163). Offred lists the names the prospective handmaids exchange in the gymnasium turned makeshift dormitory (5), and she subsequently names all but one of these women again in other flashbacks from the Red Center (166), thus revealing June as her previous, true name, a puzzle the academics in the epilogue significantly fail to solve (387). Telling this name to Nick, the Commander’s chauffeur, is at once both an act of intimacy and of resistance (347), “giving him her most precious possession” while leaving the reader “enough hints so that her most attentive listeners can hear it as well” (Cooke 131). Conversely, Michael suggests, “by
patronymic of the Commander who serves as proxy for Gilead’s totalitarian authority, “suggest[s] ‘afraid,’ ‘offered,’ and ‘off-read’ (misread) … a linguistic emblem of the regime’s misogynistic social system” (Reading 140; cf. Cooke 125). Daniel Abraham further suggests that “everything about the Handmaids is red, and the rebellious narrator is ‘off-red’” (cf. Macpherson 56).

_The Handmaid’s Tale_ invokes many of the same anxieties as those of earlier dystopias such as fascism, World War II, and the Cold War. However, also at issue is the rise of conservative politics as exemplified in the election of Ronald Reagan in the United States and the success of Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative Party in Britain, as well as conservative-aligned religious activism and the ideological state apparatus that results when such activism succeeds (Stein, Atwood 80). Claeyes, for instance, describes Gilead as “a decaying fundamentalist Christian theocracy” (197). Stevenson thus surmises that “Atwood does not want to embody the evil in one man or even in a few Think Tank members. The real antagonist is the faceless power of a state driven by religious fanatics who are determined to obliterate the individual freedoms of those outside the white male Radical Right power structure” (134). Offred’s prayer of panic further reflects Winston’s complete abasement before O’Brien in Room 101: “I’ll give up Nick, I’ll forget about the others. … I don’t want pain. … I want to keep on living, in any form. …

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19 These etymological suggestions point also to the possibility that although most other names in the narrative are mimetic, “the narrator could have fictionalized the name in her endeavor to remain anonymous” (Michael 165), giving Offred a typological name in the manner of such earlier satire as that of John Bunyan, Henry Fielding, and Charles Dickens, as well as that of Lewis in such works as _The Pilgrim’s Regress_ and potentially typological names such as Ransom, Weston, and Hardcastle in the Cosmic Trilogy. Thus, the efforts of Pieixoto and others in the epilogue to determine the identity of “Fred” the Commander may be following a false lead, as Pieixoto “does not even entertain the possibility” that Fred may not be a historical character (Michael 165).
They can do what they like with me. I am abject. I feel, for the first time, their true power” (367-68).

The dystopian setting of Gilead in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, nominally based upon the regime’s interpretation of Christian scripture, demonstrates the dangers of religious fundamentalism as an ideological state apparatus and a potential enabler of totalitarianism. *The Handmaid’s Tale* “describes a society whose tenets are drawn directly from the Old Testament,” at least nominally (Cooke 21); for instance, Aunt Lydia cites Deuteronomy during an execution in which the handmaids are permitted to kill an alleged rapist (*Handmaid’s* 358-60). Staels identifies this state as based in particular on “an imitation of the biblical land of Jacob and Laban, where Jacob restored hope and fertility with the help of Handmaids” (157; cf. Genesis 30), and the think tank responsible for establishing Gilead is known as the Sons of Jacob (Atwood, *Handmaid’s* 388). That Gilead is “a monolithic theocracy more oppressive even than Puritan rule” recalls the austerity and omnipresent surveillance of More’s *Utopia* (Freibert 281), and Booker argues that Gilead’s policies are “reminiscent … of the reinscriptions of religion in dystopian classics like *We*, *Brave New World*, and *1984*” (Dystopian 162). In particular, state anxiety in Gilead over inappropriate relationships between commanders and handmaids “echoes Freud’s suggestion that sexual relationships lead to private loyalties that might supersede communal ones” (163), much as happens in the forbidden liaison between Winston and Julia in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. However, Shaffer notes that although the government “claims to take the Book of Genesis at its word,” actually “‘the men of Gilead appropriate the text of the Bible’ merely ‘to fit their political, social, and sexual goals’” (Reading 139), as for instance when the government annuls June’s marriage to make her a handmaid (Macpherson 55), taking away her child “on no grounds other than ideology and force” (Mark Evans 186; Hammill 526). Freibert
suggests that the “religious trappings that pervade the political structure foster the idea that the primary purpose of the system is to protect women, while the actual purpose is to control them” (283). Stein likewise argues that the Gilead regime “appropriates biblical texts to institute and enforce harsh political control, to shape a political reality for its citizens,” a reality including such practices as “state-sanctioned rape,” and that Gilead’s “recasting” of these texts “obliterates the emotional meaning of the [stories]” (61). Macpherson similarly suggests that in Gilead “scripture is altered to fit the regime’s purpose, and familiar sayings become new scripture, often with their original meanings destroyed or removed” (54). Booker surmises that “the religious emphasis that centrally informs the society is concerned not with spiritual salvation but with political domination” (Dystopian 165).

Thus, despite their rhetorical differences, the ostensibly religious dystopian regime of Gilead is largely of a piece with nominally leftist regimes of previous dystopias. While the nominal values of Gilead differ from those of previous dystopian regimes, and in theory the “religious basis of the Republic … means that the state cannot be seen as an end in itself” (Parrinder 145), the underlying principle of totalitarianism is consistent between these governments (Ferns 130). Stein further points out that the “state-controlled religion of Gilead … offers its adherents little spiritual sustenance. Its belief system is a harsh theology based on a judgmental father god rather than on a nurturing divinity. The state cynically selects the texts which it privileges to authorize its political control, and promulgates religious rituals (such as the Salvagings, Particicutions and Prayvaganzas) as ‘steam valve[s] for the female elements’” (“Atwood’s” 62; Atwood, Handmaid’s 390), following the “dispensation of mob justice” of Puritan New England (Mark Evans 180). Booker notes that the “Gileadeans have in fact imported a number of bits of spurious Christian ideology” (Dystopian 165). Under religious
pretexts, segregation is reinstituted in Gilead, as the “Children of Ham” are “resettled” in
sparsely populated areas (107; cf. Thomas), and Jews are deported from Gilead or killed (259-60,
389), while Moira’s description of the “sectarian roundups” recalls Martin Niemöller’s
description of the progression of atrocities in Nazi Germany (321).

As with the complicit prison chaplain in Burgess, the state religious structure of Gilead
demonstrates the perils of religious institutionalism. While the authorities of Gilead impose their
religious dogma on the rest of the population, individual religious expression is proscribed.
Although the Commander’s household contains a Bible, it is locked away except for monthly
assemblies (Handmaid’s 112-16; Freibert 284); Offred observes that it “is kept locked up, the
way people once kept tea locked up, so the servants wouldn’t steal it. It is an incendiary device:
who knows what we’d make of it, if we ever got our hands on it? We can be read to from it, by
him, but we cannot read” (Handmaid’s 112). Thus, “only the Commander is allowed to
(mis)read it or to (mis)read passages from it to the women in the household,” who “lack the
means to challenge the Gileadean regime’s interpretation of the Bible and of history” (Michael
155-56). When the Commander reads the Bible, Offred likens him to “a man toying with a steak,
behind a restaurant window, pretending not to see the eyes watching him from hungry
darkness not three feet from his elbow. … He has something we don’t have, he has the word. How we
squandered it, once.” Offred reflects that at the Red Center where the handmaids are
indoctrinated, the Beatitudes were “played … from a tape, so not even an Aunt would be guilty
of the sin of reading” (114).20 As a result, the rulers “have power over the use and abuse of
language” (Staels 159). These restrictions afford the regime the opportunity to distort and add

20 Stein further suggests that Red in Red Center may be short for reeducation (Atwood 79), recalling the reeducation
facilities of “Red” communist regimes.
their own new material to what they present as scripture: “Blessed be the meek. Blessed are the silent. I knew they made that up, I knew it was wrong, and they left things out, too, but there was no way of checking” (Atwood, *Handmaid’s* 115). Booker notes that “the Bible is considered highly dangerous—as it was, in fact, in the Middle Ages …. This secrecy already hints that there may be something bogus about the religious ideology that rules Gilead …. The official policies of Gilead are invariably justified by Biblical precedent, but since no one but the leaders of the ‘republic’ have access to the Bible they are able to claim Biblical precedent for almost anything they want” (*Dystopian* 165).

While nominally a theocratic government, Gilead enacts a syncretic combination of religious ideology and fascist, state capitalist, or nominally Marxist authoritarianism. The regime passes off as scripture an appropriated and twisted Marxist slogan: “From each, says the slogan, *according to her ability; to each according to his needs.* … It was from the Bible, or so they said. St. Paul again, in Acts” (*Handmaid’s* 151). The “cross-and-star pattern” of Gilead similarly recalls the sickle and star of communist regimes (17). The themed naming of stores such as Loaves and Fishes, Daily Bread, Lilies of the Field, All Flesh, and Milk and Honey suggests a centrally planned economy of state capitalism in which the Gilead regime exclusively controls the means of production and distribution (33-36, 212), although Pieixoto notes that the “Jewish repatriation scheme” was privatized with dire results (389). That these stores have supplanted such predecessors as movie theaters and ice cream shops recalls the earlier propositions of such utopian authors as More that production cease of unnecessary goods and services that only create and fulfill extraneous desires for consumer goods (33, 213-15), despite an apparent exception for the lucrative “Soul Scrolls” franchise from which individuals can purchase computerized prayer
as “a sign of piety and faithfulness to the regime” that “helps … careers” (215-17).\footnote{Booker suggests that this enterprise “serves as a fairly obvious symbol of the mechanical, dehumanized, and spiritually bankrupt nature of religion in Gilead,” pointing out also that its antecedents existed in 1980s America (\textit{Dystopian} 166).} In dialogue with Offred, the Commander notes that prior to Gilead, money “was the only measure of worth, for everyone” (284), recalling More’s criticism of early capitalism in \textit{Utopia}, though capitalism recurs under the post-Gilead regime (383), and the academics of the epilogue believe that “more historical data and exhaustive material facts about Gilead would have made the tale a commercially interesting exchange object” (Staels 173-74). Thus, \textit{The Handmaid’s Tale} offers “a more sinister solution to the ‘labour problem’ first defined by [Edward] Bellamy” and, like \textit{Looking Backward}, depicts “a centralised state in which mobilisation and regimentation are the norm” (Parrinder 17), with the twist, Parrinder argues, that \textit{The Handmaid’s Tale} redefines labor as “reproductive rather than economic activity” (146). However, Staels argues that despite the regime change, “the rulers [of Gilead] highly esteem the values … that typify the capitalist spirit. Everything is coded, measured and regulated to an economic value. All human qualities are … reduced to quantitative values of exchange. In other words, the new rulers equate the value of something and someone solely with validity, usefulness, functionality, economic profit” (158). According to Stevenson, Gilead exists as a “highly developed caste system … whereby people are allowed to function on only one aspect of their humanity, their economic service to the state. The men are largely defined by their work roles and are assigned wives, depending on the value of their work to the state” (133), and women perform one-dimensional or multidimensional roles accordingly (134).

Conversely, however, religious and spiritual ideology also underlies resistance to Gilead. The early resistance to Gilead encompasses adherents of numerous faiths, accommodating the
conscience constraints of each (*Handmaid’s* 318). The Gilead regime arrests Quakers accused of “smuggling precious national resources over the border into Canada” (107), and Offred speculates that Quakers may have helped Luke escape Gilead (134), much as they aided Moira’s escape attempt. Meanwhile, rebel groups of Baptist guerrillas fight against the regime (26, 106). Offred notes that Gilead’s losing Central America to the “Libertheos,” presumably a portmanteau for followers of liberation theology, results in a shortage of oranges in Gilead (34), and Offred reflects that nuns in Gilead often endure torture and deportation to the Colonies rather than recant their vows and become handmaids (285, 323). Offred mentally sings “Amazing Grace” to herself, describing it as “lugubrious, mournful, presbyterian” and noting that “[such] songs are not sung anymore in public, especially the ones that use words like free. They are considered too dangerous. They belong to outlawed sects” (71). Offred also prays the Lord’s Prayer, supplementing it with her own reflections: “maybe it’s not Your doing; I don’t believe for an instant that what’s going on out there is what You meant. … Then there’s Kingdom, power and glory. It takes a lot to believe in those right now. But I’ll try it anyway. … You must feel pretty ripped off. I guess it’s not the first time. If I were You I’d be fed up. I’d really be sick of it” (252-53). Her reflections on heaven and hell recall the objections of More and Lewis to utopia: “You might even provide a Heaven for [the others]. We need You for that. Hell we can make for ourselves” (252). Staels likens this reflection to that of Job in the Bible in that Offred “addresses God while she wavers between belief and despair” (168).

At first glance, Offred’s critique of the religious ideology nominally underlying Gilead appears in sharp contrast to the attitudes toward religion in some earlier dystopian authors such as Burgess, as well as those of the Inklings and the satirical elements of their works. However,
these authors likewise argue the dangers of and ultimately reject theocracy as a means of enacting an ideal society. Lewis, for instance, argues that theocracy is the nadir of politics:

I am a democrat because I believe that no man or group of men is good enough to be trusted with uncontrolled power over others. And the higher the pretensions of such power, the more dangerous I think it is both to the rulers and to the subjects. Hence Theocracy is the worst of all governments. If we must have a tyrant a robber baron is far better than an inquisitor. The baron’s cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity at some point be sated; and since he dimly knows he is doing wrong he may possibly repent. But the inquisitor who mistakes his own cruelty and lust of power and fear for the voice of Heaven will torment us infinitely because he torments us with the approval of his own conscience and his better impulses appear to him as temptations. … In a word, [theocracy] forbids wholesome doubt. (“Reply” 105-06)

Lewis further contends that theocratic fundamentalism “is breaking Aristotle’s canon—to demand in every enquiry that degree of certainty which the subject matter allows.” Further, Lewis expresses opposition to “all very drastic and sudden changes of society (in whatever direction) because they never in fact take place except by a particular technique”:

That technique involves the seizure of power by a small, highly disciplined group of people; the terror and the secret police follow. it would seem, automatically. I do not think any group good enough to have such power. They are men of like passions with ourselves. The secrecy and discipline of their organisation will have already inflamed in them that passion for the inner ring which I think at least as corrupting as avarice; and their high ideological pretensions will have lent all their passions the dangerous prestige of the Cause. (106)

While this ideological fundamentalism and technique of revolution underlies the N.I.C.E. in That Hideous Strength, and Reverend Straik in particular among the N.I.C.E. employs religious rhetoric on behalf of the Institute’s agenda (Hideous 76-78, 174-76), the Sons of Jacob think tank and the subsequent Gilead regime in The Handmaid’s Tale likewise exhibit this “secrecy and discipline” in their early covert workings, their violent seizure of power, and the “terror and the secret police” of the Eyes. Among critics of utopia and dystopia, Pierce points out a common hubris of altruism among both theocratic and secular regimes attempting to establish utopia:
“there can also be a blind pride in seemingly benevolent ideals, which must be imposed on humanity ‘for its own good.’ The practical consequences of the hubris of altruism have included John Calvin’s Geneva and Pol Pot’s Democratic Kampuchea, and it is important to remember that both might still be regarded as noble ideas had they not succeeded so thoroughly” (168).

Atwood’s narrative incorporates many elements of such previous dystopian works as Nineteen Eighty-Four, demonstrating further continuity between earlier utopias and more recent dystopias. Offred’s pre-Gilead memories are “a subversive destabilization of official history, for the despotic rulers of Gilead want to obliterate such a past” (Stein, Atwood 65; cf. Staels 164), to “force the inhabitants to live ‘here and now’ only, with their faces squashed against a wall of Gileadean logic” (Staels 167), much as the jailers of Tolkien and Lewis wish to keep their prisoners focused on their immediate surroundings. In particular, the totalitarian repression of sexuality in Atwood is prefigured in the sexual taboos of Orwell’s Oceania and even anxieties about sexuality in Lewis. Monika Hilder, for instance, notes that according to members of the N.I.C.E. in Lewis’s That Hideous Strength, as long as sexual relations “are exercised by free moral agents, society cannot become ‘governable’” (102), and Paul Leopold argues that “sex is one of the awkward facts that get in the way of the general modern tendency to make people interchangeable” (qtd. in Hilder 185).

The epilogue “cautions its readers against the easy optimism implicit in linear time and the conventional narrative paradigm” (Ingersoll 45), much as Lewis and the Inklings cautioned against “chronological snobbery” and complacent contempt for the past. The epilogue suggests that time “loops around, and only fools can be confident that the achievements of freedom can last without eternal vigilance” (46). These elements of the epilogue demonstrate a key peril of speculative fiction, according to Patrick Murphy: “If a work seems too far removed from the
everyday, too impossibly wonderful, awful, or simply fanciful … the sublimation that does occur will lead simply to a cathartic reduction of anxiety. And whether it simply enables escapism or reinforces smug assumptions, such a work will encourage social inaction and facilitate the continuation of the status quo” (26). In *The Handmaid’s Tale*, by contrast, “there is no cathartic victory, [but] there is the promise of resistance” (33).

Freibert suggests that the third epigraph to *The Handmaid’s Tale*, the Sufi proverb “In the desert there is no sign that says, Thou shalt not eat stones,” telegraphs Atwood’s “view of social control”: “on the most basic level of survival human beings instinctively know what to do and what to avoid; [the proverb] suggests the corollary that authorities should avoid unnecessary regulation. Sufi simplicity counterpoints the outrageous legalism of Gilead’s political structure and pleads for human freedom and survival” (285). While this view of human instinct reflects a Pelagian rather than Augustinian view of humanity according to the paradigm of Burgess and earlier authors, Offred’s description of a new partner handmaid, apparently loyal to the Gilead regime, as “the new, treacherous Ofglen” implies that both women owe allegiance to something greater than the state (363-67).

Atwood’s prowess at literary criticism underlies the richness of *The Handmaid’s Tale* as a dystopia in the tradition of *Nineteen Eight-Four* and other works, much as the medieval and renaissance literary scholarship of Tolkien and Lewis underlies these authors’ fiction. Atwood studied under critic and theorist Northrop Frye at the University of Toronto’s Victoria College shortly after Frye published *Anatomy of Criticism* in 1957 (Atwood, “Frye” 399-403; Cooke 21). Atwood’s critical technique emphasizes repeated close readings: “What I like to do before I say I’m going to do a review is to read the book to see whether I enjoy it enough to want to read it again, and possibly again. If the answer is no then … I can’t do this. It may be a good book but I
have, personally, nothing to say about it” (qtd. in Macpherson 4). Lewis advocated a similar critical reading strategy, repeatedly expressing impatience with readers who found one reading sufficient for a seemingly exhaustive understanding of a work:

There is no clearer distinction between the literary and the unliterary. It is infallible. The literary man re-reads, other men simply read. A novel once read is to them like yesterday’s newspaper. One may have some hopes of a man who has never read the *Odyssey*, or Malory, or Boswell, or *Pickwick*: but none (as regards literature) of the man who tells you he has read them, and thinks that settles the matter. (“Different” 154-55)

Thus, according to Hilde Staels, the problematic elements of the Nunavut conference reflect real issues of literary interpretation and criticism, cautioning against surface reading of *The Handmaid’s Tale* itself and of literature in general:

Readers who neglect to investigate the form of Atwood’s novels are often inclined to passively accept the discursive statements of Atwood’s first-person narrators, instead of questioning them. Such readers … fall into the trap of literalist patterns of reading. … Readers who are in search of a “true story” fail to discover, for example, potential internal contradictions in the signifying process of the first-person narrator. … They overlook possible (ironic) tensions between the products of meaning established by an evaluating protagonist and the organization of the text. (5)

These readers therefore follow the lead of the Nunavut academics in that they “fall into the trap of naïve realism” (Staels 217). However, Magali Michael argues that the “feminist thrust” of *The Handmaid’s Tale* is “strengthened by the use of postmodern elements that undermine the status quo but that critics have for the most part overlooked” (44), noting that the epilogue in particular “disrupt[s] temporal boundaries as well as any clear distinction between reality and fiction” and “offers the most sustained challenge to the status quo” (136-37), while such devices as Offred’s multiple-choice account of Luke’s fate and her false starts in recounting a visit to Nick demonstrate that “her truth is neither stable nor fixed … all three variants are true in the sense that she believes them all to be possible …. The novel offers truth or reality as a function of available information and, therefore, as inherently provisional” (157).
Thus, despite the centrality of an Augustinian perspective on humanity to the social satire of More in *Utopia* and the usefulness of an Augustinian lens as a heuristic device in analyzing the problematic elements of early leftist utopianism, the danger of theocracy as an ideological apparatus in support of dystopian authoritarianism is amply evident not only in overtly feminist dystopia such as Atwood’s *Handmaid’s Tale*, but also in the Augustinian-informed dystopia of Burgess and in the speculative fiction, literary analysis, and correspondence of the Inklings. While the Augustinian paradigm of original sin and fallen humanity complements the secular pessimism toward human nature of dystopian authors such as Huxley and Orwell, an essential corollary of the Augustinian paradigm is that political and religious leaders remain susceptible to original sin and the fall, as exemplified in such institutions and individuals as the Musical Banks in *Erewhon*, the prospective of religious tyranny in Morris’s “A Dream of John Ball,” Moses the raven and his tales of Sugarcandy Mountain in *Animal Farm*, Straik of the N.I.C.E. in *That Hideous Strength*, or the Sons of Jacob in *The Handmaid’s Tale*.

Thus, in the works of Burgess as well as those of Lewis, Tolkien, and the Inklings, the Augustinian paradigm of original sin and fallen humanity supplements the secular pessimism toward human nature exhibited in dystopias such as those of Huxley and Orwell. While Lewis, Tolkien, and the Inklings incorporated these ideas of original sin into largely non-utopian speculative fiction, Lewis’s Cosmic Trilogy approaches the genres of utopia and dystopia in the setting of Malacandra and the machinations of the N.I.C.E., respectively, Anthony Burgess applies the theological and philosophical conflict between Pelagianism and Augustinianism directly to the genre of dystopia. Further, Burgess’s juxtaposition of dystopian authoritarianism with a protagonist who epitomizes the concepts of original sin and fallen humanity results in a synthesis of conventional dystopia following the lead of Orwell and Huxley with the objections
of Wells that individual liberties taken to the extremes of anarchy ultimately restrict the freedoms of others. Meanwhile, Atwood’s invocation of a theocratic totalitarian dystopia suggests that although secular dystopian authors such as Orwell and religious authors such as Lewis share pessimism toward human nature, the religious foundations of the Augustinian paradigm threaten the use of religious rhetoric to undergird authoritarian regimes. However, the worship of Ford and Freud in Huxley and the cult of Big Brother in Nineteen Eighty-Four suggest commonalities between totalitarian theocracy and nominally secular authoritarianism. Further, the Augustinian conception of original sin and the fall includes also the principle of what Augustine identified as libido dominandi, the will to power or the desire to dominate, and the authoritarian regimes of both nominally secular and nominally religious varieties in dystopia and other speculative fiction exemplify this libido dominandi. Thus, attempts to depict and a more just and equitable society or to prevent increasing systemic inequity and injustice on the part of both secular and Augustinian authors must contend with this issue of libido dominandi, and despite their deeper ideological differences, authors and potential reformers from diverse perspectives can find common ground in many areas in working toward a more equitable world.
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