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Definitions

(From *The English Handbook* by Trine Østergaard, Systime, 2017)

Dystopian fiction

Dystopia refers to a world where things are not as they are supposed to be. It is often set in a futuristic, imagined universe where the illusion of a perfect society (utopia) is maintained through an oppressive¹ societal² control. This control can be either corporate³ (*The Minority Report*), bureaucratic and technological (*The Matrix*) or totalitarian (*1984*, *The Hunger Games*). Dystopian novels or short stories often criticise societal norms or the political system through the dystopian worst-case scenario. Therefore, the themes in a dystopian novel can reflect events relevant for today's society.

The protagonist⁴ in a dystopian story often feels trapped and struggles to escape, questions the political system and believes that something is very wrong with the society in which she/he lives.

One of the characteristics of a dystopian society is that propaganda is used to control the citizens of the society and therefore, information, independent⁵ thought and freedom (of speech) are restricted. The society is dehumanized⁶ as citizens live in a state of fear and are under surveillance⁷. The society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.

Key characteristics of dystopian fiction

- The protagonist questions the political system
- The protagonist struggles to escape
- Propaganda controls the citizens
- Information and independent thought are restricted
- A state of fear and surveillance
- An illusion of a perfect utopian society
- Can reflect and criticise existing societal norms and political systems

Examples of dystopian fiction

- *Brave New World* (1931) by Aldous Huxley
- *1984* (1949) by George Orwell
- *A Handmaid's Tale* (1985) by Margaret Atwood
- *The Hunger Games* (2008) by Suzanne Collins
- *Divergent* (2011) by Veronica Roth

¹ Adj. undertrykkende

² Adj. samfundsmæssige

³ Adj. Virksomheds-

⁴ Sb. hovedperson

⁵ Adj. uafhængig

⁶ Adj. umenneskeligt

⁷ Sb. overvågning

Utopian fiction

Opposite dystopia, utopia refers to a place, state or condition which is ideally perfect in terms of politics, laws and customs⁸. The word utopia was invented by Sir Thomas More in 1516 when he wrote *Utopia*.

In a utopian society, societal ideas and the common good for the society are maintained through a system with no money (citizens work as they enjoy) and no government (government is seen as a tool of power and corruption and therefore warned against. Instead, society is characterised by citizenry⁹ in a communal and societal type of *government*). Citizens in a utopian society live in harmony with nature and if technology is part of society, it is used to enhance¹⁰ human living conditions and therefore has a positive effect on society. Utopian fiction does not serve as a model to a better way of life. On the contrary, the purpose of utopian fiction is often to make the reader aware of problems and faults within the existing political system.

Therefore, the protagonist in a utopian society questions the existing societal and political structures with the purpose of making them better. The protagonist's main task is to promote a better world.

Some of the main characteristics of a utopian society are that there is no fear end citizens live in harmony embracing nature. Information, independent thought and freedom are valued, and citizens are encouraged to think independently, embrace social and moral ideas as well as acting as an individual and thinking innovatively for the good of society. The main focus in a utopian society is to evolve¹¹ with change to make an ideally perfect world.

Key characteristics of utopian fiction

- No government and no money
- Live in harmony with nature
- The protagonist questions the existing political system to make it better
- Promotion of information, independent thought and freedom
- Citizens are encouraged to think and act independently
- Utopian fiction makes the reader aware of problems and faults in the existing political system

Examples of utopian fiction

- *Erewhon* (1872) by Samuel Butler (try to read the title backwards)
 - *A Modern Utopia* (1905) by H.G. Wells
 - *Ecotopia: The Notebooks and Reports of William Weston* (1975) by Ernest Callenbach
 - *Always Coming Home* (1985) by Ursula K. Le Guin
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⁸ Sb. skik

⁹ Sb. borgerskab

¹⁰ Vb. forbedre

¹¹ Vb. udvikle sig

1984 by George Orwell (1949)

Part 1, Chapter 1

- 5 It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile¹² wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty¹³ dust from entering along with him.
- 10 The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly¹⁴ handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours.
- 15 It was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a varicose ulcer¹⁵ above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived¹⁶ that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.
- 20 Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of pig-iron. The voice came from an oblong¹⁷ metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument (the telescreen, it was
- 25 called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely. He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the meagerness¹⁸ of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine¹⁹, his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended.
- 30 Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and

¹² Modbydelig

¹³ Gruset

¹⁴ Markerede

¹⁵ Et skinnebessår (fra netdoktor: Et skinnebessår er et sår, der typisk sidder i 'gamacheområdet', det vil sige omkring anklerne eller lidt op ad skinnebenet. Et skinnebessår kan udvikles spontant, det vil sige, at det kan opstå uden nogen kendt årsag. Men det kan også opstå efter slag eller stød mod benet, hvorefter såret ikke vil hele, fordi der er sygdom i kredsløbet. Såret er ofte smertefuldt, dette er dog meget varierende fra person til person.

¹⁶ Udtænkt

¹⁷ Rektangel

¹⁸ Mager/tynd

¹⁹ Rødmosset

the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The blackmoustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own. Down at streetlevel another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word INGSOC. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was the police patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.

Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig-iron and the overfulfilment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable²⁰ that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live -- did live, from habit that became instinct -- in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized²¹.

Winston kept his back turned to the telescreen. It was safer, though, as he well knew, even a back can be revealing. A kilometre away the Ministry of Truth, his place of work, towered vast and white above the grimy²² landscape. This, he thought with a sort of vague distaste -- this was London, chief city of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the provinces of Oceania. He tried to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been quite like this. Were there always these vistas of rotting nineteenth-century houses, their sides shored up with baulks of timber, their windows patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron, their crazy garden walls sagging in all directions? And the bombed sites where the plaster dust swirled in the air and the willow-herb straggled over the heaps of rubble; and the places where the bombs had cleared a larger patch and there had sprung up sordid colonies of wooden dwellings like chicken-houses? But it was no use, he could not remember: nothing remained of his childhood except a series of bright-lit tableaux occurring against no background and mostly unintelligible²³.

The Ministry of Truth -- Minitrue, in Newspeak -- was startlingly different from any other object in sight. It was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, 300 metres into the air. From where Winston stood it was just possible to read,

²⁰ Muligt/tænkeligt

²¹ Gransket (undersøge grundigt)

²² Snavset

²³ Uforståelig

picked out on its white face in elegant lettering, the three slogans of the Party:

WAR IS PEACE

5 FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

10 The Ministry of Truth contained, it was said, three thousand rooms above ground level, and corresponding ramifications²⁴ below. Scattered about London there were just three other buildings of similar appearance and size. So completely did they dwarf the surrounding architecture that from the roof of Victory Mansions you could see all four of them simultaneously. They were the homes of the four Ministries between which the entire apparatus of government was divided. The Ministry of Truth, which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education, 15 and the fine arts. The Ministry of Peace, which concerned itself with war. The Ministry of Love, which maintained law and order. And the Ministry of Plenty, which was responsible for economic affairs. Their names, in Newspeak²⁵: Minitrue, Minipax, Miniluv, and Miniplenty.

20 The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one. There were no windows in it at all. Winston had never been inside the Ministry of Love, nor within half a kilometre of it. It was a place impossible to enter except on official business, and then only by penetrating through a maze of barbed-wire entanglements, steel doors, and hidden machine-gun nests. Even the streets leading up to its outer barriers were roamed by gorilla-faced guards in black uniforms, armed with jointed truncheons²⁶.

25 Winston turned round abruptly. He had set his features into the expression of quiet optimism which it was advisable to wear when facing the telescreen. He crossed the room into the tiny kitchen. By leaving the Ministry at this time of day he had sacrificed his lunch in the canteen, and he was aware that there was no food in the kitchen except a hunk of dark-coloured bread which 30 had got to be saved for tomorrow's breakfast. He took down from the shelf a bottle of colourless liquid with a plain white label marked VICTORY GIN. It gave off a sickly, oily smell, as of Chinese ricespirit. Winston poured out nearly a teacupful, nerved himself for a shock, and gulped it down like a dose of medicine.

35 Instantly his face turned scarlet and the water ran out of his eyes. The stuff was like nitric acid, and moreover, in swallowing it one had the sensation of being hit on the back of the head with a rubber club. The next moment, however, the burning in his belly died down and the world began to look more cheerful. He took a cigarette from a crumpled packet marked VICTORY CIGARETTES and incautiously held it upright, whereupon the tobacco fell out on to the floor. With the next he

²⁴ Forgreninger

²⁵ A new "language" invented in this dystopian society

²⁶ Knippel/politistav

was more successful. He went back to the living-room and sat down at a small table that stood to the left of the telescreen. From the table drawer he took out a penholder, a bottle of ink, and a thick, quarto-sized²⁷ blank book with a red back and a marbled cover.

5 For some reason the telescreen in the living-room was in an unusual position. Instead of being placed, as was normal, in the end wall, where it could command the whole room, it was in the longer wall, opposite the window. To one side of it there was a shallow alcove in which Winston was now sitting, and which, when the flats were built, had probably been intended to hold bookshelves. By sitting in the alcove, and keeping well back, Winston was able to remain outside
10 the range of the telescreen, so far as sight went. He could be heard, of course, but so long as he stayed in his present position he could not be seen. It was partly the unusual geography of the room that had suggested to him the thing that he was now about to do.

But it had also been suggested by the book that he had just taken out of the drawer. It was a
15 peculiarly beautiful book. Its smooth creamy paper, a little yellowed by age, was of a kind that had not been manufactured for at least forty years past. He could guess, however, that the book was much older than that. He had seen it lying in the window of a frowsy little junk-shop in a slummy quarter of the town (just what quarter he did not now remember) and had been stricken immediately by an overwhelming desire to possess it. Party members were supposed not to go
20 into ordinary shops ('dealing on the free market', it was called), but the rule was not strictly kept, because there were various things, such as shoelaces and razor blades, which it was impossible to get hold of in any other way. He had given a quick glance up and down the street and then had slipped inside and bought the book for two dollars fifty. At the time he was not conscious of wanting it for any particular purpose. He had carried it guiltily home in his briefcase. Even with
25 nothing written in it, it was a compromising possession.

The thing that he was about to do was to open a diary. This 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-labour camp. Winston fitted a nib²⁸
30 into the penholder and sucked it to get the grease off. The pen was an archaic²⁹ instrument, seldom used even for signatures, and he had procured³⁰ one, furtively³¹ and with some difficulty, simply because of a feeling that the beautiful creamy paper deserved to be written on with a real nib instead of being scratched with an ink-pencil. Actually he was not used to writing by hand. Apart from very short notes, it was usual to dictate everything into the speakwrite which was of
35 course impossible for his present purpose. He dipped the pen into the ink and then faltered for just a second. A tremor had gone through his bowels. To mark the paper was the decisive act. In small clumsy letters he wrote:

²⁷ Bog i kvartformat

²⁸ Fyldepen

²⁹ Gammeldags

³⁰ (Frem)skaffe

³¹ Hemmelighedsfuldt

April 4th, 1984.

5 He sat back. A sense of complete helplessness had descended upon him. To begin with, he did not know with any certainty that this was 1984. It must be round about that date, since he was fairly sure that his age was thirty-nine, and he believed that he had been born in 1944 or 1945; but it was never possible nowadays to pin down any date within a year or two.

10 For whom, it suddenly occurred to him to wonder, was he writing this diary? For the future, for the unborn. His mind hovered for a moment round the doubtful date on the page, and then fetched up³² with a bump against the Newspeak word doublethink. For the first time the magnitude of what he had undertaken came home to him. How could you communicate with the future? It was of its nature impossible. Either the future would resemble the present, in which case it would not listen to him: or it would be different from it, and his predicament would be
15 meaningless.

For some time he sat gazing stupidly at the paper. The telescreen had changed over to strident military music. It was curious that he seemed not merely to have lost the power of expressing himself, but even to have forgotten what it was that he had originally intended to say. For weeks
20 past he had been making ready for this moment, and it had never crossed his mind that anything would be needed except courage. The actual writing would be easy. All he had to do was to transfer to paper the interminable³³ restless monologue that had been running inside his head, literally for years. At this moment, however, even the monologue had dried up. Moreover his varicose ulcer had begun itching unbearably. He dared not scratch it, because if he did so it always
25 became inflamed. The seconds were ticking by. He was conscious of nothing except the blankness of the page in front of him, the itching of the skin above his ankle, the blaring of the music, and a slight booziness caused by the gin.

30 Suddenly he began writing in sheer panic, only imperfectly aware of what he was setting down. His small but childish handwriting straggled up and down the page, shedding first its capital letters and finally even its full stops:

35 April 4th, 1984. Last night to the flicks³⁴. All war films. One very good one of a ship full of refugees being bombed somewhere in the Mediterranean. Audience much amused by shots of a great huge fat man trying to swim away with a helicopter after him, first you saw him wallowing along in the water like a porpoise³⁵, then you saw him through the helicopters gunsights, then he was full of holes and the sea round him turned pink and he sank as suddenly as though the holes had let in the water, audience shouting with laughter when he sank. then you saw a lifeboat full of children

³² Standsede

³³ Endeløse

³⁴ Slang for film

³⁵ Marsvin

with a helicopter hovering over it. there was a middle-aged woman might have been a jewess³⁶ sitting up in the bow with a little boy about three years old in her arms. little boy screaming with fright and hiding his head between her breasts as if he was trying to burrow right into her and the woman putting her arms round him and comforting him although she was blue with fright herself, all the time covering him up as much as possible as if she thought her arms could keep the bullets off him. then the helicopter planted a 20 kilo bomb in among them terrific flash and the boat went all to matchwood. then there was a wonderful shot of a child's arm going up up up right up into the air a helicopter with a camera in its nose must have followed it up and there was a lot of applause from the party seats but a woman down in the prole³⁷ part of the house suddenly started kicking up a fuss and shouting they didnt oughter of showed it not in front of kids they didnt it aint right not in front of kids it aint until the police turned her turned her out i dont suppose anything happened to her nobody cares what the proles say typical prole reaction they never --

Winston stopped writing, partly because he was suffering from cramp. He did not know what had made him pour out this stream of rubbish. But the curious thing was that while he was doing so a totally different memory had clarified itself in his mind, to the point where he almost felt equal to writing it down. It was, he now realized, because of this other incident that he had suddenly decided to come home and begin the diary today.

It had happened that morning at the Ministry, if anything so nebulous³⁸ could be said to happen.

It was nearly eleven hundred, and in the Records Department, where Winston worked, they were dragging the chairs out of the cubicles and grouping them in the centre of the hall opposite the big telescreen, in preparation for the Two Minutes Hate. Winston was just taking his place in one of the middle rows when two people whom he knew by sight, but had never spoken to, came unexpectedly into the room. One of them was a girl whom he often passed in the corridors. He did not know her name, but he knew that she worked in the Fiction Department. Presumably -- since he had sometimes seen her with oily hands and carrying a spanner³⁹ she had some mechanical job on one of the novel-writing machines. She was a bold-looking girl, of about twenty-seven, with thick hair, a freckled face, and swift, athletic movements. A narrow scarlet sash, emblem of the Junior Anti-Sex League, was wound several times round the waist of her overalls, just tightly enough to bring out the shapeliness of her hips. Winston had disliked her from the very first moment of seeing her. He knew the reason. It was because of the atmosphere of hockey-fields and cold baths and community hikes and general clean-mindedness which she managed to carry about with her. He disliked nearly all women, and especially the young and pretty ones. It was always the women, and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted⁴⁰ adherents⁴¹ of the Party, the swallows of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers-out of unorthodoxy. But this

³⁶ -es = femininum. En jødisk kvinde

³⁷ Proletar

³⁸ Vagt

³⁹ Skruenøgle

⁴⁰ Fanatiske

⁴¹ Tilhængere

particular girl gave him the impression of being more dangerous than most. Once when they passed in the corridor she gave him a quick sidelong glance which seemed to pierce right into him and for a moment had filled him with black terror. The idea had even crossed his mind that she might be an agent of the Thought Police. That, it was true, was very unlikely. Still, he continued to
5 feel a peculiar uneasiness, which had fear mixed up in it as well as hostility, whenever she was anywhere near him.

The other person was a man named O'Brien, a member of the Inner Party and holder of some post so important and remote that Winston had only a dim idea of its nature. A momentary hush
10 passed over the group of people round the chairs as they saw the black overalls of an Inner Party member approaching. O'Brien was a large, burly⁴² man with a thick neck and a coarse, humorous, brutal face. In spite of his formidable appearance he had a certain charm of manner. He had a trick of resettling his spectacles on his nose which was curiously disarming -- in some indefinable way, curiously civilized. It was a gesture which, if anyone had still thought in such terms, might have
15 recalled an eighteenth-century nobleman offering his snuffbox. Winston had seen O'Brien perhaps a dozen times in almost as many years. He felt deeply drawn to him, and not solely because he was intrigued by the contrast between O'Brien's urbane manner and his prize-fighter's physique. Much more it was because of a secretly held belief -- or perhaps not even a belief, merely a hope -
- that O'Brien's political orthodoxy was not perfect. Something in his face suggested it irresistibly.
20 And again, perhaps it was not even unorthodoxy that was written in his face, but simply intelligence. But at any rate he had the appearance of being a person that you could talk to if somehow you could cheat the telescreen and get him alone. Winston had never made the smallest effort to verify this guess: indeed, there was no way of doing so. At this moment O'Brien glanced
25 at his wrist-watch, saw that it was nearly eleven hundred, and evidently decided to stay in the Records Department until the Two Minutes Hate was over. He took a chair in the same row as Winston, a couple of places away. A small, sandy-haired woman who worked in the next cubicle to Winston was between them. The girl with dark hair was sitting immediately behind.

The next moment a hideous, grinding speech, as of some monstrous machine running without oil,
30 burst from the big telescreen at the end of the room. It was a noise that set one's teeth on edge and bristled the hair at the back of one's neck. The Hate had started.

As usual, the face of Emmanuel Goldstein, the Enemy of the People, had flashed on to the screen. There were hisses here and there among the audience. The little sandy-haired woman gave a
35 squeak of mingled fear and disgust. Goldstein was the renegade⁴³ and backslider⁴⁴ who once, long ago (how long ago, nobody quite remembered), had been one of the leading figures of the Party, almost on a level with Big Brother himself, and then had engaged in counter-revolutionary activities, had been condemned to death, and had mysteriously escaped and disappeared. The programmes of the Two Minutes Hate varied from day to day, but there was none in which

⁴² Kraftig/stærk

⁴³ Overløber

⁴⁴ Frafalden

Goldstein was not the principal figure. He was the primal traitor, the earliest defiler⁴⁵ of the Party's purity⁴⁶. All subsequent crimes against the Party, all treacheries, acts of sabotage, heresies⁴⁷, deviations⁴⁸, sprang directly out of his teaching. Somewhere or other he was still alive and hatching his conspiracies: perhaps somewhere beyond the sea, under the protection of his foreign paymasters, perhaps even -- so it was occasionally rumoured -- in some hiding-place in Oceania itself.

Winston's diaphragm⁴⁹ was constricted. He could never see the face of Goldstein without a painful mixture of emotions. It was a lean Jewish face, with a great fuzzy aureole⁵⁰ of white hair and a small goatee beard -- a clever face, and yet somehow inherently despicable, with a kind of senile silliness in the long thin nose, near the end of which a pair of spectacles was perched. It resembled the face of a sheep, and the voice, too, had a sheep-like quality. Goldstein was delivering his usual venomous attack upon the doctrines of the Party -- an attack so exaggerated and perverse that a child should have been able to see through it, and yet just plausible enough to fill one with an alarmed feeling that other people, less level-headed than oneself, might be taken in by it. He was abusing Big Brother, he was denouncing the dictatorship of the Party, he was demanding the immediate conclusion of peace with Eurasia, he was advocating freedom of speech, freedom of the Press, freedom of assembly, freedom of thought, he was crying hysterically that the revolution had been betrayed -- and all this in rapid polysyllabic⁵¹ speech which was a sort of parody of the habitual style of the orators of the Party, and even contained Newspeak words: more Newspeak words, indeed, than any Party member would normally use in real life. And all the while, lest one should be in any doubt as to the reality which Goldstein's specious⁵² claptrap⁵³ covered, behind his head on the telescreen there marched the endless columns of the Eurasian army -- row after row of solid-looking men with expressionless Asiatic faces, who swam up to the surface of the screen and vanished, to be replaced by others exactly similar. The dull rhythmic tramp of the soldiers' boots formed the background to Goldstein's bleating voice.

Before the Hate had proceeded for thirty seconds, uncontrollable exclamations of rage were breaking out from half the people in the room. The self-satisfied sheep-like face on the screen, and the terrifying power of the Eurasian army behind it, were too much to be borne: besides, the sight or even the thought of Goldstein produced fear and anger automatically. He was an object of hatred more constant than either Eurasia or Eastasia, since when Oceania was at war with one of these Powers it was generally at peace with the other. But what was strange was that although Goldstein was hated and despised by everybody, although every day and a thousand times a day,

⁴⁵ Person som besudler andre

⁴⁶ Renhed

⁴⁷ Kætterske gerninger

⁴⁸ Afvigelser

⁴⁹ Mellemgulv

⁵⁰ Glorie

⁵¹ Flerstavelses-

⁵² Besnærende

⁵³ Hule/tomme fraser

on platforms, on the telescreen, in newspapers, in books, his theories were refuted, smashed, ridiculed, held up to the general gaze for the pitiful rubbish that they were in spite of all this, his influence never seemed to grow less. Always there were fresh dupes⁵⁴ waiting to be seduced by him. A day never passed when spies and saboteurs acting under his directions were not unmasked
5 by the Thought Police. He was the commander of a vast shadowy army, an underground network of conspirators dedicated to the overthrow of the State. The Brotherhood, its name was supposed to be. There were also whispered stories of a terrible book, a compendium of all the heresies⁵⁵, of which Goldstein was the author and which circulated clandestinely⁵⁶ here and there. It was a book without a title. People referred to it, if at all, simply as the book. But one knew of such things only
10 through vague rumours. Neither the Brotherhood nor the book was a subject that any ordinary Party member would mention if there was a way of avoiding it.

In its second minute the Hate rose to a frenzy. People were leaping up and down in their places and shouting at the tops of their voices in an effort to drown the maddening bleating voice that
15 came from the screen. The little sandy-haired woman had turned bright pink, and her mouth was opening and shutting like that of a landed fish. Even O'Brien's heavy face was flushed. He was sitting very straight in his chair, his powerful chest swelling and quivering as though he were standing up to the assault of a wave. The dark-haired girl behind Winston had begun crying out 'Swine! Swine! Swine!' and suddenly she picked up a heavy Newspeak dictionary and flung it at the
20 screen. It struck Goldstein's nose and bounced off; the voice continued inexorably. In a lucid⁵⁷ moment Winston found that he was shouting with the others and kicking his heel violently against the rung of his chair. The horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act a part, but, on the contrary, that it was impossible to avoid joining in. Within thirty seconds any pretence was always unnecessary. A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill,
25 to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge-hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic. And yet the rage that one felt was an abstract, undirected emotion which could be switched from one object to another like the flame of a blowlamp. Thus, at one moment Winston's hatred was not turned against Goldstein at all, but, on the contrary, against Big Brother,
30 the Party, and the Thought Police; and at such moments his heart went out to the lonely, derided heretic on the screen, sole guardian of truth and sanity in a world of lies. And yet the very next instant he was at one with the people about him, and all that was said of Goldstein seemed to him to be true. At those moments his secret loathing of Big Brother changed into adoration, and Big Brother seemed to tower up, an invincible, fearless protector, standing like a rock against the
35 hordes of Asia, and Goldstein, in spite of his isolation, his helplessness, and the doubt that hung about his very existence, seemed like some sinister enchanter⁵⁸, capable by the mere power of his voice of wrecking the structure of civilization.

⁵⁴ Fjolser

⁵⁵ Kætterske tanker

⁵⁶ I al hemmelighed

⁵⁷ Klart

⁵⁸ Trolldmand

It was even possible, at moments, to switch one's hatred this way or that by a voluntary act. Suddenly, by the sort of violent effort with which one wrenches one's head away from the pillow in a nightmare, Winston succeeded in transferring his hatred from the face on the screen to the dark-haired girl behind him. Vivid, beautiful hallucinations flashed through his mind. He would flog her to death with a rubber truncheon. He would tie her naked to a stake and shoot her full of arrows like Saint Sebastian. He would ravish⁵⁹ her and cut her throat at the moment of climax. Better than before, moreover, he realized why it was that he hated her. He hated her because she was young and pretty and sexless, because he wanted to go to bed with her and would never do so, because round her sweet supple waist, which seemed to ask you to encircle it with your arm, there was only the odious⁶⁰ scarlet sash, aggressive symbol of chastity.

The Hate rose to its climax. The voice of Goldstein had become an actual sheep's bleat, and for an instant the face changed into that of a sheep. Then the sheep-face melted into the figure of a Eurasian soldier who seemed to be advancing, huge and terrible, his sub-machine gun roaring, and seeming to spring out of the surface of the screen, so that some of the people in the front row actually flinched backwards in their seats. But in the same moment, drawing a deep sigh of relief from everybody, the hostile figure melted into the face of Big Brother, black-haired, black-moustachio'd, full of power and mysterious calm, and so vast that it almost filled up the screen. Nobody heard what Big Brother was saying. It was merely a few words of encouragement, the sort of words that are uttered in the din of battle, not distinguishable individually but restoring confidence by the fact of being spoken. Then the face of Big Brother faded away again, and instead the three slogans of the Party stood out in bold capitals:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

But the face of Big Brother seemed to persist for several seconds on the screen, as though the impact that it had made on everyone's eyeballs was too vivid to wear off immediately. The little sandyhaired woman had flung herself forward over the back of the chair in front of her. With a tremulous murmur that sounded like 'My Saviour!' she extended her arms towards the screen. Then she buried her face in her hands. It was apparent that she was uttering a prayer.

At this moment the entire group of people broke into a deep, slow, rhythmical chant of 'B-B! ...B-B!' -- over and over again, very slowly, with a long pause between the first 'B' and the second-- a heavy, murmurous sound, somehow curiously savage⁶¹, in the background of which one seemed

⁵⁹ Voldtage

⁶⁰ Frastødende

⁶¹ Brutal/barbarisk

to hear the stamp of naked feet and the throbbing of tom-toms. For perhaps as much as thirty seconds they kept it up. It was a refrain that was often heard in moments of overwhelming emotion. Partly it was a sort of hymn to the wisdom and majesty of Big Brother, but still more it was an act of self-hypnosis, a deliberate drowning of consciousness by means of rhythmic noise.

5 Winston's entrails seemed to grow cold. In the Two Minutes Hate he could not help sharing in the general delirium, but this sub-human chanting of 'B-B! ...B-B!' always filled him with horror. Of course he chanted with the rest: it was impossible to do otherwise. To dissemble your feelings, to control your face, to do what everyone else was doing, was an instinctive reaction. But there was a space of a couple of seconds during which the expression of his eyes might conceivably have

10 betrayed him. And it was exactly at this moment that the significant thing happened -- if, indeed, it did happen.

Momentarily he caught O'Brien's eye. O'Brien had stood up. He had taken off his spectacles and was in the act of resettling them on his nose with his characteristic gesture. But there was a

15 fraction of a second when their eyes met, and for as long as it took to happen Winston knew -- yes, he knew! -- that O'Brien was thinking the same thing as himself. An unmistakable message had passed. It was as though their two minds had opened and the thoughts were flowing from one into the other through their eyes. 'I am with you,' O'Brien seemed to be saying to him. 'I know precisely what you are feeling. I know all about your contempt, your hatred, your disgust. But

20 don't worry, I am on your side!' And then the flash of intelligence was gone, and O'Brien's face was as inscrutable⁶² as everybody else's.

That was all, and he was already uncertain whether it had happened. Such incidents never had any sequel. All that they did was to keep alive in him the belief, or hope, that others besides himself

25 were the enemies of the Party. Perhaps the rumours of vast underground conspiracies were true after all -- perhaps the Brotherhood really existed! It was impossible, in spite of the endless arrests and confessions and executions, to be sure that the Brotherhood was not simply a myth. Some days he believed in it, some days not. There was no evidence, only fleeting glimpses that might mean anything or nothing: snatches of overheard conversation, faint scribbles on lavatory⁶³ walls -

30 - once, even, when two strangers met, a small movement of the hand which had looked as though it might be a signal of recognition. It was all guesswork: very likely he had imagined everything. He had gone back to his cubicle without looking at O'Brien again. The idea of following up their momentary contact hardly crossed his mind. It would have been inconceivably dangerous even if he had known how to set about doing it. For a second, two seconds, they had exchanged an

35 equivocal glance, and that was the end of the story. But even that was a memorable event, in the locked loneliness in which one had to live.

Winston roused himself and sat up straighter. He let out a belch. The gin was rising from his stomach.

40

⁶² Uransageligt

⁶³ Toilet

His eyes re-focused on the page. He discovered that while he sat helplessly musing he had also been writing, as though by automatic action. And it was no longer the same cramped, awkward handwriting as before. His pen had slid voluptuously over the smooth paper, printing in large neat capitals -

5

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

10

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER

15

over and over again, filling half a page.

He could not help feeling a twinge of panic. It was absurd, since the writing of those particular words was not more dangerous than the initial act of opening the diary, but for a moment he was tempted to tear out the spoiled pages and abandon the enterprise altogether.

20

He did not do so, however, because he knew that it was useless. Whether he wrote DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER, or whether he refrained from writing it, made no difference. Whether he went on with the diary, or whether he did not go on with it, made no difference. The Thought Police would get him just the same. He had committed -- would still have committed, even if he had never set pen to paper -- the essential crime that contained all others in itself. Thoughtcrime, they called it. Thoughtcrime was not a thing that could be concealed forever. You might dodge successfully for a while, even for years, but sooner or later they were bound to get you.

25

It was always at night -- the arrests invariably happened at night. The sudden jerk out of sleep, the rough hand shaking your shoulder, the lights glaring in your eyes, the ring of hard faces round the bed. In the vast majority of cases there was no trial, no report of the arrest. People simply disappeared, always during the night. Your name was removed from the registers, every record of everything you had ever done was wiped out, your one-time existence was denied and then forgotten. You were abolished, annihilated: vaporized was the usual word.

35

For a moment he was seized by a kind of hysteria. He began writing in a hurried untidy scrawl:

theyll shoot me i don't care theyll shoot me in the back of the neck i dont care down with big brother they always shoot you in the back of the neck i dont care down with big brother --

40

He sat back in his chair, slightly ashamed of himself, and laid down the pen. The next moment he

started⁶⁴ violently. There was a knocking at the door.

5 Already! He sat as still as a mouse, in the futile⁶⁵ hope that whoever it was might go away after a single attempt. But no, the knocking was repeated. The worst thing of all would be to delay. His heart was thumping like a drum, but his face, from long habit, was probably expressionless. He got up and moved heavily towards the door.

⁶⁴ Give et sæt i én

⁶⁵ forgæves

Utopia by Thomas More (1516) – in excerpts

5 *The famous book is a piece of fiction by an Englishman, who attacks in his own way the chief political and social evils of his time. The book starts with an account of how More met up with a man named Raphael Hythloday a man who had been with Amerigo Vespucci in the voyages to the new world lately discovered (accounts of these voyages had been printed in 1507, only nine years before Utopia was written) More then makes up a fictional story of how Raphael Hythloday told More about a place in the new world called Utopia.*

10 *In the beginning of the book, More recalls how he was impressed and inspired by what Hythloday told him about the laws of the Utopians, and he suggested to Hythloday that he seek a job at court as councilor of a prince or king so that he could help the prince or king create a better society. To this Hythloday replied: “[M]ost princes apply themselves more to affairs of war than to the useful arts of peace; and in these I neither have any knowledge, nor do I much desire it; they are generally more set on acquiring new kingdoms, right or wrong, than on governing well those they possess”.*
15 *Hythloday then continues to describe Utopia in detail.*

OF THEIR TOWNS, PARTICULARLY OF AMAUROT

The streets are very convenient for all carriage, and are well sheltered from the winds. Their buildings are good, and are so uniform⁶⁶ that a whole side of a street looks like one house. The
20 streets are twenty feet broad; there lie gardens behind all their houses [...], and, there being no property among them, every man may freely enter into any house whatsoever. At every ten years’ end they shift their houses by lots. They cultivate their gardens with great care, so that they have both vines, fruits, herbs, and flowers in them; and all is so well ordered and so finely kept that I never saw gardens anywhere that were both so fruitful and so beautiful as theirs. [...] Their roofs
25 are flat, and on them they lay a sort of plaster, which costs very little, and yet is so tempered that it is not apt to take fire, and yet resists the weather more than lead. They have great quantities of glass among them, with which they glaze their windows.

OF THEIR MAGISTRATES

30 Thirty families choose every year a magistrate, who was anciently called the Syphogrant, but is now called the Philarch; and over every ten Syphogrants, with the families subject to them, there is another magistrate, who was anciently called the Tranibore, but of late the Archphilarch. All the

⁶⁶ ens

Syphogrants, [...] choose the Prince out of a list of four who are named by the people of the four divisions of the city; but they take an oath, before they proceed to an election, that they will choose him whom they think most fit for the office: they give him their voices⁶⁷ secretly, so that it is not known for whom every one gives his suffrage⁶⁸. The Prince is for life, unless he is removed upon suspicion of some design to enslave the people. The Tranibors are new chosen every year, but yet they are, for the most part, continued; all their other magistrates are only annual. The Tranibors meet every third day, and oftener if necessary, and consult with the Prince either concerning the affairs of the State in general, or such private differences as may arise sometimes among the people, though that falls out but seldom. There are always two Syphogrants called into the council chamber, and these are changed every day. It is a fundamental rule of their government, that no conclusion can be made in anything that relates to the public till it has been first debated three several days in their council. It is death for any to meet and consult concerning the State, unless it be either in their ordinary council, or in the assembly of the whole body of the people. These things have been so provided among them that the Prince and the Tranibors may not conspire together to change the government and enslave the people; and therefore when anything of great importance is set on foot, it is sent to the Syphogrants, who, after they have communicated it to the families that belong to their divisions, and have considered it among themselves, make report to the senate; and, upon great occasions, the matter is referred to the council of the whole island. One rule observed in their council is, never to debate a thing on the same day in which it is first proposed; for that is always referred to the next meeting, that so men may not rashly and in the heat of discourse engage themselves too soon, which might bias them so much that, instead of consulting the good of the public, they might rather study to support their first opinions, and by a perverse and preposterous⁶⁹ sort of shame hazard their country rather than endanger their own reputation.

25 OF THEIR TRADES, AND MANNER OF LIFE

Throughout the island they wear the same sort of clothes, without any other distinction except what is necessary to distinguish the two sexes and the married and unmarried. The fashion never alters,

⁶⁷ Stemmer (som ved valg)

⁶⁸ Stemme/støtte

⁶⁹ Meningsløs/latterlige

and as it is neither disagreeable nor uneasy, so it is suited to the climate, and calculated both for their summers and winters.

The chief, and almost the only, business of the Syphogrants is to take care that no man may live idle⁷⁰, but that every one may follow his trade diligently⁷¹; yet they do not wear themselves out with perpetual toil⁷² from morning to night, as if they were beasts of burden, which as it is indeed a heavy slavery, [...] but they, dividing the day and night into twenty-four hours, appoint six of these for work, three of which are before dinner⁷³ and three after; they then sup, and at eight o'clock, counting from noon, go to bed and sleep eight hours: the rest of their time, besides that taken up in work, eating, and sleeping, is left to every man's discretion; yet they are not to abuse that interval to luxury and idleness, but must employ it in some proper exercise, according to their various inclinations⁷⁴, which is, for the most part, reading. It is ordinary to have public lectures every morning before daybreak, at which none are obliged to appear but those who are marked out for literature; yet a great many, both men and women, of all ranks, go to hear lectures of one sort or other, according to their inclinations.

But the time appointed for labour is to be narrowly examined, otherwise you may imagine that since there are only six hours appointed for work, they may fall under a scarcity⁷⁵ of necessary provisions⁷⁶: but it is so far from being true [...] and this you will easily apprehend if you consider how great a part of all other nations is quite idle. ⁷⁷First, women generally do little, who are the half of mankind; and if some few women are diligent, their husbands are idle: then consider the great company of idle priests, and of those that are called religious men; add to these all rich men, chiefly those that have estates⁷⁸ in land, who are called noblemen and gentlemen, together with their families, made up of idle persons, that are kept more for show than use; add to these all those strong and lusty beggars that go about pretending some disease in excuse for their begging; and upon the whole account you will find that the number of those by whose labours mankind is supplied is much less than you perhaps imagined: then consider how few of those that work are employed in labours

⁷⁰ Uvirksom/doven

⁷¹ Omhyggeligt

⁷² Slid

⁷³ "frokost"

⁷⁴ Tilbøjeligheder

⁷⁵ Mangel

⁷⁶ Forsyninger/proviant

⁷⁷ Her følger en beskrivelse af England og andre europæiske kongedømmer

⁷⁸ Godser

that are of real service, for we⁷⁹, who measure all things by money, give rise to many trades that are both vain and superfluous, and serve only to support riot and luxury.

OF THEIR TRAFFIC⁸⁰

5 But to return to their manner of living in society: the oldest man of every family, as has been already said, is its governor; wives serve their husbands, and children their parents, and always the younger serves the elder. Every city is divided into four equal parts, and in the middle of each there is a market-place. What is brought thither⁸¹, and manufactured by the several families, is carried
10 themselves; and thither every father goes, and takes whatsoever he or his family stand in need of, without either paying for it or leaving anything in exchange. There is no reason for giving a denial to any person, since there is such plenty of everything among them; and there is no danger of a man's asking for more than he needs; they have no inducements⁸² to do this, since they are sure they shall always be supplied [...]. [T]here is in man a pride that makes him fancy it a particular
15 glory to excel others in pomp and excess; but by the laws of the Utopians, there is no room for this.

OF THEIR SLAVES, AND OF THEIR MARRIAGES

[...] As they fright men from committing crimes by punishments, so they invite them to the love of virtue⁸³ by public honours; therefore they erect statues to the memories of such worthy men as have
20 deserved well of their country, and set these in their market-places, both to perpetuate⁸⁴ the remembrance of their actions and to be an incitement to their posterity⁸⁵ to follow their example.

They have but few laws, and such is their constitution that they need not many. They very much condemn⁸⁶ other nations whose laws, together with the commentaries on them, swell up to so many

⁷⁹ = englændere/europæere

⁸⁰ Handel

⁸¹ = there

⁸² Incitament/grund

⁸³ Dyd/dygtighed

⁸⁴ Forevige/sikre for al fremtid

⁸⁵ Eftertid

⁸⁶ fordømmer

volumes; for they think it an unreasonable thing to oblige men to obey a body of laws that are both of such a bulk⁸⁷, and so dark as not to be read and understood by every one of the subjects.

OF THEIR MILITARY DISCIPLINE

5 They detest war as a very brutal thing, and which, to the reproach of human nature, is more practised by men than by any sort of beasts⁸⁸. They, in opposition to the sentiments of almost all other nations, think that there is nothing more inglorious⁸⁹ than that glory that is gained by war; and therefore, though they accustom themselves daily to military exercises and the discipline of war, in which not only their men, but their women likewise, are trained up, that, in cases of necessity, they
10 may not be quite useless, yet they do not rashly engage in war, unless it be either to defend themselves or their friends from any unjust aggressors, or, out of good nature or in compassion, assist an oppressed nation in shaking off the yoke of tyranny.

[...]

Thus have I described to you, as particularly as I could, the Constitution of that commonwealth,
15 which I do not only think the best in the world, but indeed the only commonwealth that truly deserves that name. In all other places it is visible that, while people talk of a commonwealth, every man only seeks his own wealth; but there, where no man has any property, all men zealously⁹⁰ pursue the good of the public, and, indeed, it is no wonder to see men act so differently, for in other commonwealths every man knows that, unless he provides for himself, how flourishing⁹¹ so ever
20 the commonwealth may be, he must die of hunger [...], but in Utopia, where every man has a right to everything, they all know that if care is taken to keep the public stores full no private man can want anything; for among them there is no unequal distribution, so that no man is poor, none in necessity, and though no man has anything, yet they are all rich; for what can make a man so rich as
25 to lead a serene and cheerful life, free from anxieties; neither apprehending want himself, nor vexed with the endless complaints of his wife?"

[...]

⁸⁷ Af sådan et omfang

⁸⁸ Dyr

⁸⁹ Skammeligt/vanærende

⁹⁰ Ivrigt/nidkært

⁹¹ Blomstrende

On the last page of Utopia Thomas Moore adds:

“In the meanwhile, though it must be confessed that he is both a very learned man and a person who has obtained a great knowledge of the world, I cannot perfectly agree to everything he has related.

However, there are many things in the commonwealth of Utopia that I rather wish, than hope, to see

5 followed in our governments.”

Imagine by John Lennon (1971)

5

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky
Imagine all the people
Living for today... Aha-ah...

10

Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion, too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace... You...

15

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one

20

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man
Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world... You...

25

You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will live as one

30

35

“I Have a Dream” by Martin Luther King Jr. (1963) in excerpts

[...]

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

- 5 And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed⁹²: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."⁹³

- 10 I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

- 15 I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a *dream* today!

- 20 I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor⁹⁴ having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition"⁹⁵ and "nullification"⁹⁶ -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a *dream* today!

⁹² Overbevisning/trosbekendelse – henviser til Uafhængighedserklæringen

⁹³ Fra Uafhængighedserklæringen

⁹⁴ George Corley Wallace, Jr. Var Alabamas guvernør i 1963. I Wallaces tiltrædelsestale udtalte han bl.a. "Jeg siger raceadskillelse i dag, raceadskillelse i morgen, raceadskillelse for evigt" ("I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever"). Wallace deltog aktivt i protesterne mod optagelse af sorte og farvede studerende på uddannelsesinstitutionerne, og stod foran University of Alabama den 11. juni 1963 for fysisk at blokere indgangen for to farvede studerende, der var blevet optaget på universitetet. For at sikre de sorte studerendes ret til adgang på universitetet blev udkommanderet US Marshals, vicestatsanklageren og den amerikanske Nationalgarde, hvorefter Wallace opgav sin fysiske blokade.

⁹⁵ Spærring – henviser til guvernørens protester mod sorte

⁹⁶ Ophævelse – henviser til guvernørens protester mod sorte

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted⁹⁷, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."²

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

- 5 With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.
- 10 And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, From every mountainside, let freedom ring!⁹⁸

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

- 15 And so let freedom ring from the prodigious⁹⁹ hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies¹⁰⁰ of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

- 20 But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

- 25 And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day

⁹⁷ Ophøjet

⁹⁸ "America (My Country, 'Tis of Thee)" is an American patriotic song

⁹⁹ Formidabel

¹⁰⁰ En bjergkæde

when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles¹⁰¹, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

Free at last! Free at last!

Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!

5

¹⁰¹ Ikke-jøder

The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas by Ursula K. Le Guin (1973)

With a clamor¹⁰² of bells that set the swallows soaring¹⁰³, the Festival of Summer came to the city Omelas, bright-towered¹⁰⁴ by the sea. The rigging¹⁰⁵ of the boats in harbor sparkled with flags. In the streets between houses with red roofs and painted walls, between old moss-grown gardens and under avenues of trees, past
5 great parks and public buildings, processions moved. Some were decorous¹⁰⁶: old people in long stiff robes of mauve¹⁰⁷ and grey, grave master workmen, quiet, merry women carrying their babies and chatting as they walked. In other streets the music beat faster, a shimmering of gong and tambourine, and the people went dancing, the procession was a dance. Children dodged¹⁰⁸ in and out, their high calls rising like the swallows' crossing flights over the music and the singing. All the processions wound¹⁰⁹ towards the north side of the
10 city, where on the great water-meadow¹¹⁰ called the Green Fields boys and girls, naked in the bright air, with mud-stained feet and ankles and long, lithe¹¹¹ arms, exercised their restive horses before the race. The horses wore no gear¹¹² at all but a halter¹¹³ without bit. Their manes were braided with streamers of silver, gold, and green. They flared their nostrils and pranced¹¹⁴ and boasted to one another; they were vastly excited, the horse being the only animal who has adopted our ceremonies as his own. Far off to the north and west the
15 mountains stood up half encircling Omelas on her bay. The air of morning was so clear that the snow still crowning the Eighteen Peaks burned with white-gold fire across the miles of sunlit air, under the dark blue of the sky. There was just enough wind to make the banners that marked the racecourse snap¹¹⁵ and flutter now and then. In the silence of the broad green meadows one could hear the music winding through the city streets, farther and nearer and ever approaching, a cheerful faint sweetness of the air that from time to time
20 trembled and gathered together and broke out into the great joyous clanging of the bells.

Joyous! How is one to tell about joy? How describe the citizens of Omelas?

They were not simple¹¹⁶ folk, you see, though they were happy. But we do not say the words of cheer¹¹⁷ much any more. All smiles have become archaic¹¹⁸. Given a description such as this one tends to make certain

¹⁰² Larm

¹⁰³ Stige højt til vejs

¹⁰⁴ Med lysende tårne

¹⁰⁵ The ropes that support the masts and sails of a boat

¹⁰⁶ Anstændig, værdig

¹⁰⁷ Grålilla

¹⁰⁸ Smutte

¹⁰⁹ Bugte sig

¹¹⁰ A field near a river that is often flooded

¹¹¹ Smidig

¹¹² Seletøj

¹¹³ Grime – a piece of leather put around the head of a horse for leading it with

¹¹⁴ Stejle

¹¹⁵ Smælde

¹¹⁶ Enfoldig/naiv

¹¹⁷ Komme med glædesudbrud

¹¹⁸ Forældet

assumptions. Given a description such as this one tends to look next for the King, mounted on a splendid stallion and surrounded by his noble knights, or perhaps in a golden litter¹¹⁹ borne by great-muscled slaves. But there was no king. They did not use swords, or keep slaves. They were not barbarians. I do not know the rules and laws of their society, but I suspect that they were singularly¹²⁰ few. As they did without monarchy and slavery, so they also got on without the stock exchange¹²¹, the advertisement, the secret police, and the bomb. Yet I repeat that these were not simple folk, not dulcet¹²² shepherds, noble savages, bland¹²³ utopians. They were not less complex than us. The trouble is that we have a bad habit, encouraged by pedants¹²⁴ and sophisticates, of considering happiness as something rather stupid. Only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting. This is the treason of the artist: a refusal to admit the banality of evil and the terrible boredom of pain. If you can't lick¹²⁵ 'em, join 'em. If it hurts, repeat it. But to praise despair is to condemn¹²⁶ delight, to embrace violence is to lose hold of everything else. We have almost lost hold; we can no longer describe a happy man, nor make any celebration of joy. How can I tell you about the people of Omelas? They were not naive and happy children—though their children were, in fact, happy. They were mature, intelligent, passionate adults whose lives were not wretched¹²⁷. O miracle! but I wish I could describe it better. I wish I could convince you. Omelas sounds in my words like a city in a fairy tale, long ago and far away, once upon a time. Perhaps it would be best if you imagined it as your own fancy bids¹²⁸, assuming it will rise to the occasion¹²⁹, for certainly I cannot suit you all. For instance, how about technology? I think that there would be no cars or helicopters in and above the streets; this follows from the fact that the people of Omelas are happy people. Happiness is based on a just discrimination¹³⁰ of what is necessary, what is neither necessary nor destructive, and what is destructive. In the middle category, however—that of the unnecessary but undestructive, that of comfort, luxury, exuberance¹³¹, etc.—they could perfectly well have central heating, subway trains, washing machines, and all kinds of marvelous devices not yet invented here, floating light-sources, fuelless¹³² power, a cure for the common cold. Or they could have none of that; it doesn't matter. As you like it. I incline¹³³ to think that people from towns up and down the coast have been coming in to Omelas during the last days before the Festival on very fast little trains and double-decked trams¹³⁴, and that the train station of Omelas is actually the handsomest building in town, though plainer than the magnificent Farmers'

¹¹⁹ Bærestol

¹²⁰ Ualmindelig

¹²¹ Børs

¹²² Blid

¹²³ Mild

¹²⁴ A person who is too concerned with small details or rules

¹²⁵ Slå

¹²⁶ Fordømme

¹²⁷ Ulykkelig

¹²⁸ Byde

¹²⁹ Forudsat du er situationen voksen

¹³⁰ Skelnen

¹³¹ overflod

¹³² Uden brændstod

¹³³ Være tilbøjelig til

¹³⁴ Sporvogn

Market. But even granted trains, I fear that Omelas so far strikes some of you as goody-goody¹³⁵. Smiles, bells, parades, horses, bleh¹³⁶. If so, please add an orgy. If an orgy would help, don't hesitate. Let us not, however, have temples from which issue¹³⁷ beautiful nude priests and priestesses already half in ecstasy and ready to copulate¹³⁸ with any man or woman, lover or stranger, who desires union with the deep godhead¹³⁹ of the blood, although that was my first idea. But really it would be better not to have any temples in Omelas—at least, not manned¹⁴⁰ temples. Religion yes, clergy¹⁴¹ no. Surely the beautiful nudes can just wander about, offering themselves like divine souffles to the hunger of the needy and the rapture¹⁴² of the flesh. Let them join the processions. Let tambourines be struck above the copulations, and the glory of desire be proclaimed upon the gongs, and (a not unimportant point) let the offspring of these delightful rituals be beloved and looked after by all. One thing I know there is none of in Omelas is guilt. But what else should there be? I thought at first there were not drugs, but that is puritanical¹⁴³. For those who like it, the faint insistent¹⁴⁴ sweetness of drooz may perfume the ways of the city, drooz which first brings a great lightness and brilliance to the mind and limbs, and then after some hours a dreamy languor¹⁴⁵, and wonderful visions at last of the very arcana¹⁴⁶ and inmost secrets of the Universe, as well as exciting the pleasure of sex beyond belief; and it is not habit-forming. For more modest tastes I think there ought to be beer. What else, what else belongs in the joyous city? The sense of victory, surely, the celebration of courage. But as we did without clergy, let us do without soldiers. The joy built upon successful slaughter is not the right kind of joy; it will not do; it is fearful and it is trivial. A boundless¹⁴⁷ and generous contentment¹⁴⁸, a magnanimous¹⁴⁹ triumph felt not against some outer enemy but in communion¹⁵⁰ with the finest and fairest in the souls of all men everywhere and the splendor¹⁵¹ of the world's summer: this is what swells¹⁵² the hearts of the people of Omelas, and the victory they celebrate is that of life. I really don't think many of them need to take drooz.

¹³⁵ Dydsmønstret

¹³⁶ "gab"

¹³⁷ Komme ud fra

¹³⁸ Parre sig

¹³⁹ Guddommelighed

¹⁴⁰ Bemandede

¹⁴¹ Præsteskab

¹⁴² Henrykkelse

¹⁴³ Puritansk – having very strict moral attitudes

¹⁴⁴ Vedholdende

¹⁴⁵ Mathed/sløvhed

¹⁴⁶ mystiske

¹⁴⁷ Grænseløs

¹⁴⁸ Tilfredshed

¹⁴⁹ Storsindet

¹⁵⁰ Fællesskab

¹⁵¹ Glans og herlighed

¹⁵² Få til at svulme

Most of the procession have reached the Green Fields by now. A marvelous smell of cooking goes forth from the red and blue tents of the provisioners¹⁵³. The faces of small children are amiably¹⁵⁴ sticky; in the benign¹⁵⁵ grey beard of a man a couple of crumbs of rich pastry are entangled. The youths and girls have mounted their horses and are beginning to group around the starting line of the course. An old woman, small, fat, and
5 laughing, is passing out flowers from a basket, and tall young men where her flowers in their shining hair. A child of nine or ten sits at the edge of the crowd, alone, playing on a wooden flute. People pause to listen, and they smile, but they do not speak to him, for he never ceases playing and never sees them, his dark eyes wholly rapt in¹⁵⁶ the sweet, thin magic of the tune.
He finishes, and slowly lowers his hands holding the wooden flute.

10 As if that little private silence were the signal, all at once a trumpet sounds from the pavilion near the starting line: imperious¹⁵⁷, melancholy, piercing¹⁵⁸. The horses rear on their slender legs, and some of them neigh¹⁵⁹ in answer. Sober-faced, the young riders stroke the horses' necks and soothe them, whispering, "Quiet, quiet, there my beauty, my hope...." They begin to form in rank along the starting line. The crowds along the racecourse are like a field of grass and flowers in the wind. The Festival of Summer has begun.

15 Do you believe? Do you accept the festival, the city, the joy? No? Then let me describe one more thing.

In a basement under one of the beautiful public buildings of Omelas, or perhaps in the cellar of one of its spacious¹⁶⁰ private homes, there is a room. It has one locked door, and no window. A little light seeps¹⁶¹ in dustily between cracks in the boards¹⁶², secondhand from a cobwebbed¹⁶³ window somewhere across the cellar. In one corner of the little room a couple of mops¹⁶⁴, with stiff, clotted¹⁶⁵, foul-smelling heads stand
20 near a rusty bucket. The floor is dirt, a little damp to the touch, as cellar dirt usually is. The room is about three paces¹⁶⁶ long and two wide: a mere broom closet or disused tool room. In the room a child is sitting. It could be a boy or a girl. It looks about six, but actually is nearly ten. It is feeble-minded¹⁶⁷. Perhaps it was born defective, or perhaps it has become imbecile¹⁶⁸ through fear, malnutrition¹⁶⁹, and neglect¹⁷⁰. It picks its

¹⁵³ En der sørger for proviant

¹⁵⁴ På en sød måde

¹⁵⁵ Mild

¹⁵⁶ Fordybet i

¹⁵⁷ Bydende

¹⁵⁸ Gennemtrængende

¹⁵⁹ Vrinske

¹⁶⁰ Rummelige

¹⁶¹ Sive

¹⁶² brædder

¹⁶³ Dækket af spindelvæv

¹⁶⁴ Gulvmopper

¹⁶⁵ Klumpet

¹⁶⁶ Skridt

¹⁶⁷ Evnesvag

¹⁶⁸ åndssløv

¹⁶⁹ Underernæring

¹⁷⁰ Forsømmelse

nose and occasionally fumbles vaguely with its toes or genitals¹⁷¹, as it sits hunched¹⁷² in the corner farthest from the bucket and the two mops. It is afraid of the mops. It finds them horrible. It shuts its eyes, but it knows the mops are still standing there; and the door is locked; and nobody will come. The door is always locked; and nobody ever comes, except that sometimes—the child has no understanding of time or interval—

5 sometimes the door rattles terribly and opens, and a person, or several people, are there. One of them may come in and kick the child to make it stand up. The others never come close, but peer¹⁷³ in at it with frightened, disgusted eyes. The food bowl and the water jug are hastily filled, the door is locked, the eyes disappear. The people at the door never say anything, but the child, who has not always lived in the tool

10 room, and can remember sunlight and its mother’s voice, sometimes speaks. “I will be good,” it says. “Please let me out. I will be good!” They never answer. The child used to scream for help at night, and cry a good deal, but now it only makes a kind of whining¹⁷⁴, “eh-haa, eh-haa,” and it speaks less and less often. It is so thin there are no calves¹⁷⁵ to its legs; its belly protrudes¹⁷⁶; it lives on a half-bowl of corn meal¹⁷⁷ and grease¹⁷⁸ a day. It is naked. Its buttocks and thighs are a mass of festered¹⁷⁹ sores, as it sits in its own excrement continually.

15 They all know it is there, all the people of Omelas. Some of them have come to see it, others are content merely to know it is there. They all know that it has to be there. Some of them understand why, and some do not, but they all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships, the health of their children, the wisdom of their scholars¹⁸⁰, the skill of their makers, even the abundance of their harvest and the kindly weathers of their skies, depend wholly on this child’s abominable¹⁸¹ misery.

20 This is usually explained to children when they are between eight and twelve, whenever they seem capable of understanding; and most of those who come to see the child are young people, though often enough an adult comes, or comes back, to see the child. No matter how well the matter has been explained to them, these young spectators are always shocked and sickened at the sight. They feel disgust, which they had thought themselves superior to¹⁸². They feel anger, outrage, impotence¹⁸³, despite all the explanations. They would

25 like to do something for the child. But there is nothing they can do. If the child were brought up into the sunlight out of that vile¹⁸⁴ place, if it were cleaned and fed and comforted, that would be a good thing indeed;

¹⁷¹ Kønsorganer

¹⁷² Sammenkrøben

¹⁷³ Kigge nysgerrigt

¹⁷⁴ Klagende, klynkende lyd

¹⁷⁵ Læg

¹⁷⁶ Stikke frem

¹⁷⁷ Majsmeal

¹⁷⁸ Fedt/spæk

¹⁷⁹ Betændte

¹⁸⁰ Videnskabsmand

¹⁸¹ Afskyelige

¹⁸² Hævet over

¹⁸³ Afmagt

¹⁸⁴ Modbydelig

but if it were done, in that day and hour all the prosperity¹⁸⁵ and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed. Those are the terms. To exchange all the goodness and grace of every life in Omelas for that single, small improvement: to throw away the happiness of thousands for the chance of the happiness of one: that would be to let guilt within the walls indeed.

5 The terms are strict and absolute; there may not even be a kind word spoken to the child.

Often the young people go home in tears, or in a tearless rage, when they have seen the child and faced this terrible paradox. They may brood over it for weeks or years. But as time goes on they begin to realize that even if the child could be released, it would not get much good of its freedom: a little vague pleasure of warmth and food, no doubt, but little more. It is too degraded¹⁸⁶ and imbecile to know any real joy. It has
10 been afraid too long ever to be free of fear. Its habits are too uncouth¹⁸⁷ for it to respond to humane treatment. Indeed, after so long it would probably be wretched¹⁸⁸ without walls about it to protect it, and darkness for its eyes, and its own excrement to sit in. Their tears at the bitter injustice dry when they begin to perceive¹⁸⁹ the terrible justice of reality, and to accept it. Yet it is their tears and anger, the trying of their generosity¹⁹⁰ and the acceptance of their helplessness, which are perhaps the true source of the splendor of
15 their lives. Theirs is no vapid¹⁹¹, irresponsible happiness. They know that they, like the child, are not free. They know compassion¹⁹². It is the existence of the child, and their knowledge of its existence, that makes possible the nobility¹⁹³ of their architecture, the poignancy¹⁹⁴ of their music, the profundity¹⁹⁵ of their science. It is because of the child that they are so gentle with children. They know that if the wretched one were not there sniveling¹⁹⁶ in the dark, the other one, the flute-player, could make no joyful music as the young riders
20 line up in their beauty for the race in the sunlight of the first morning of summer.

Now do you believe in them? Are they not more credible¹⁹⁷? But there is one more thing to tell, and this is quite incredible.

At times one of the adolescent girls or boys who go to see the child does not go home to weep or rage, does not, in fact, go home at all. Sometimes also a man or woman much older falls silent for a day or two, and then
25 leaves home. These people go out into the street and walk down the street alone. They keep walking, and walk straight out of the city of Omelas, through the beautiful gates. They keep walking across the farmlands

¹⁸⁵ Velstand

¹⁸⁶ Fornedret

¹⁸⁷ Primitive

¹⁸⁸ Ulykkelig

¹⁸⁹ Forstå

¹⁹⁰ Gavmildhed

¹⁹¹ Indholdsløs

¹⁹² Medfølelse

¹⁹³ Pragt

¹⁹⁴ Intensitet

¹⁹⁵ Dybsindighed

¹⁹⁶ Snøfte

¹⁹⁷ Troværdig

of Omelas. Each one goes alone, youth or girl, man or woman. Night falls; the traveler must pass down village streets, between the houses with yellow-lit windows, and on out into the darkness of the fields. Each alone, they go west or north, towards the mountains. They go on. They leave Omelas, they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back. The place they go towards is a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness. I cannot describe it at all. It is possible that it does not exist. But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas.