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FROM UTOPIAN DREAMS TO TWENTIETH-CENTURY DYSTOPIAN
NIGHTMARES: MODERN FEARS OF THE WORLD STATE AND “BIG BROTHER”
IN HUXLEY, ORWELL, AND BURGESS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Title: From Utopian Dreams to Twentieth–Century Dystopian Nightmares: Modern Fears of the World State and “Big Brother” in Huxley, Orwell, and Burgess.

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Dating all the way back to Plato’s Republic, a variety of authors have fictionalized what an ideal community might look like. Thomas More was one of the first authors to write in–depth about an ideal society, addressing everything from local government to religion, dress, the work day, and even leisure time. Lewis Mumford defines utopia as “a world by itself, divided into ideal commonwealths, with all its communities clustered into proud cities, aiming bravely at the good life” (11). The opposite of a utopia, a dystopia, is defined by Ruth Levitas as representing “the fear of what the future may hold if we do not act to avert catastrophe, whereas utopia encapsulates the hope of what might be” (165). This project focuses primarily on three major contemporary British dystopias: Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932) George Orwell’s *1984* (1958), and Anthony Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange* (1962).

I argue that any totalizing theory of a perfect society is necessarily imperfect, because the needs of individuals frequently conflict with the greater social needs around them, making a perfectly harmonious existence between the individual and society impossible. In addition, a purely classless and wageless society, outlined in Marx and Engels’ *The German Ideology* as the fifth and final stage, is impractical and unsustainable for a lengthy period of time in the modern world, which is one of the flaws of Marxist theory. In the conclusion, I synthesis my findings and also suggest broader and more

recent directions in two American dystopian novels, through briefer analyses of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*.