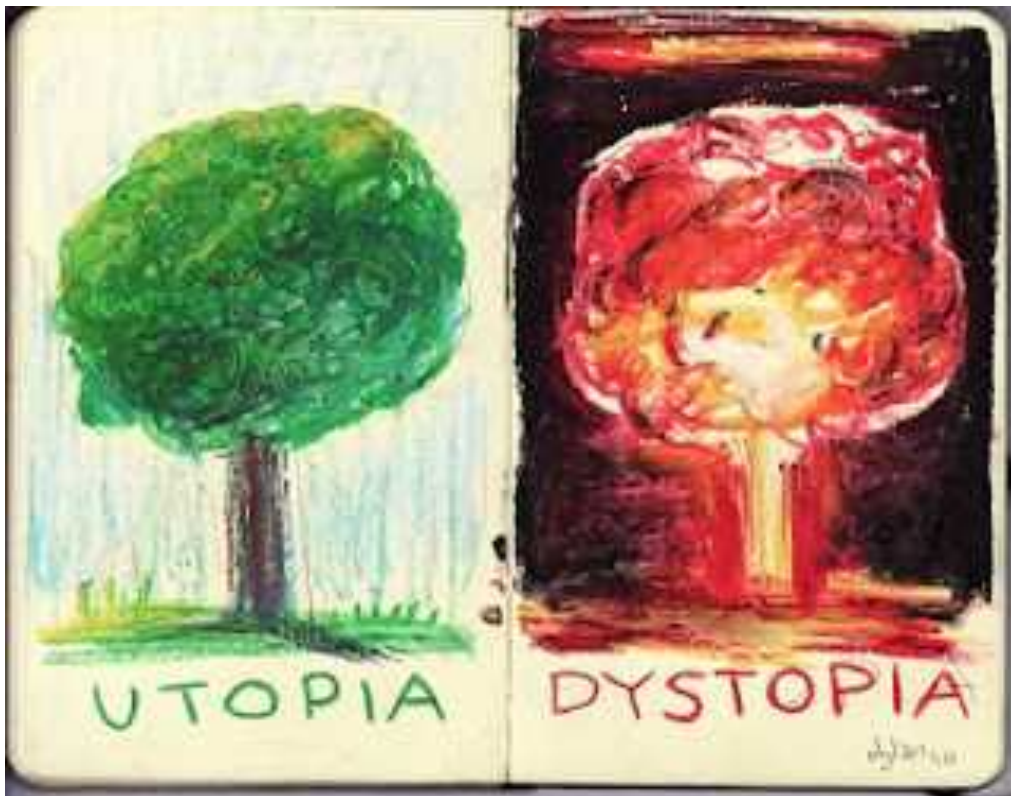


UTOPIA / DYSTOPIA

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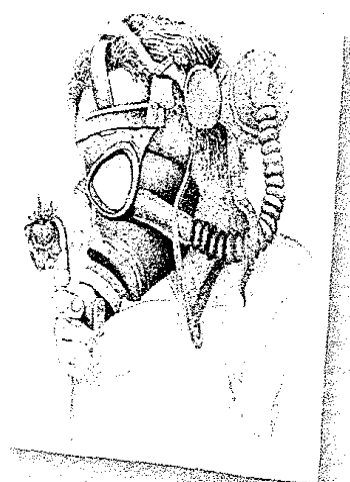
I. SOME DEFINITIONS

Utopia: Greek “ou” (not) + “topos” (place)

An imaginary perfect world where everyone is happy. The socio-political order ensures human well-being, often combined with a democratic and classless form of government. No evil exists.

Dystopia: Greek “dys” (bad)

An imaginary place where life is extremely difficult and a lot of unfair or immoral things happen. Dystopias often present a society deprived of human rights and under the control of a totalitarian socio-political system.



Science Fiction:

A genre that is concerned with future technological innovations, changes in the environment, space travel and life on distant planets.

Cyberpunk:

A genre that deals with the conflict among hackers and artificial intelligences within a society controlled by mega-corporations.



(Post-) Apocalypse:

A genre that is preoccupied with the final destruction of our world or the new era after the apocalypse has struck.

PRE-READING TASKS

1. Make a list of any novels, films and songs that would fit into any of the categories listed above. Discuss their messages.
2. Make a DINA3 poster that captures your vision of the future. Present your ideas, fears and hopes to the class.
3. What should be the ideals of a utopian society?
4. Comment on the following quotes:
 - ☒ “All paradises, all utopias are designed by who is not there, by the people who are not allowed in.” (Toni Morrison)
 - ☒ “A utopia is a dystopia forced upon you by a madman.” (Sam J. Lundwall)

II. THE ROOTS

THOMAS MORE - UTOPIA



Sir Thomas More (1478-1535), also known as Saint Thomas Morus, was an English lawyer, scholar, author, statesman, and a saint within the Catholic Church. Sir Thomas More wrote *Utopia* in the years 1515-16, when men's imaginations were stirred by the sudden enlargement of their conceptions of the world, and Amerigo Vespucci's account of his voyages westward, first printed in 1507, was fresh in every scholar's mind. In More's *Utopia*, a mariner tells of a distant island he has visited, describing its organisation and society. The work was not printed in England during the reign of Henry VIII, and could not be, for its satire - which mocked English policy with ironical praise - was too direct to be misunderstood.

PRE-READING TASKS

1. Who was Amerigo Vespucci?
2. In what way did Vespucci stir the imagination of an entire generation?
3. Find definitions for the following words: satire, irony, sarcasm and euphemism
4. What do you think did More criticise about politics in England at the time?
5. What do you know about Henry VIII and his reign?

EXTRACT FROM MORE'S *UTOPIA*

Thus I have described to you, as particularly as I could, the constitution of that commonwealth, which I do not only think the best in the world, but indeed the only commonwealth that truly deserves the name. In all other places it is evident that, while people talk of a commonwealth, every man only seeks his own wealth; but there, where no man has any property, all men zealously pursue the good of the public. In other commonwealths every man knows that unless he provides for himself, how flourishing soever the commonwealth may be, he must die of hunger, so that he sees the necessity of preferring his own concerns to the public 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 to lead a serene and cheerful life, free from anxieties; neither apprehending want himself, nor vexed with the endless complaints of his wife? He is not afraid of the misery of his children, nor is he contriving how to raise a portion for his

daughters, but is secure in this, that both he and his wife, his children and grandchildren, to as many generations as he can fancy, will all live both plentifully and happily; since among them there is no less care taken of those who were once engaged in labour, but grow afterward unable to follow it, than there is elsewhere of these that continue still employed.

I would gladly hear any man compare the justice that is among the Utopians with that of all other nations, among whom may I perish if I see anything that looks either like justice or equity. For what justice is there in this, that a nobleman, a goldsmith, a banker, or any other man, that either does nothing at all, or at best is employed in things that are of no use to the public, should live in great luxury and splendour upon what is so ill acquired; and a mean man — a carter, a smith, or a ploughman — that works harder even than the beasts themselves, and is employed in labours so necessary that no commonwealth could hold out a year without them, can only earn so poor a livelihood, and must lead so miserable a life that the condition of the beasts is much better than theirs? [...]

Therefore I must say that, as I hope for mercy, I can have no other notion of all the other governments that I see or know, than that they are a conspiracy of the rich, who, on pretence of managing the public, only pursue their private ends, and devise all the ways and arts they can find out; first, that they may, without danger, preserve all that they have so ill-acquired, and then, that they may engage the poor to toil and labour for them at as low rates as possible, and oppress them as much as they please; and if they can but prevail to get these contrivances established by the show of public authority, which is considered as the representative of the whole people, then they are accounted laws; yet these wicked men, after they have, by a most insatiable covetousness, divided that among themselves with which all the rest might have been well supplied, are far from that happiness that is enjoyed among the Utopians; for the use as well as the desire of money being extinguished, much anxiety and great occasions of mischief is cut off with it, and who does not see that the frauds, thefts, robberies, quarrels, tumults, contentions, seditions, murders, treacheries, and witchcrafts, which are, indeed, rather

punished than restrained by the severities of law, would all fall off, if money were not any more valued by the world?

COMPREHENSION

1. Explain what is meant by “the only commonwealth that truly deserves the name”.
2. Make two lists of key words contrasting the conditions to be found in Utopia and those existing in the real world of More’s time.
3. Examine the connection between human behaviour and economic security in Utopia. According to the author, what effect does the guarantee of material welfare have on the attitudes and behaviour of the Utopians?
4. What, according to More, is the major source of injustice in society?
5. For what reasons does More despise noblemen, goldsmiths and bankers?
6. Discuss More’s ideal society. Do you think his model could really work?
7. Would you like to live in More’s perfect world? Why? Why not?

Title illustration / first edition of *Utopia* (1516)



ESSAY TOPICS

1. Do you think More would arrive at the same conclusions if he lived in our time? Discuss and give solid evidence for your claims!
2. “More’s utopian ideals are incompatible with human nature”. Discuss!

PROJECT

1. In the movie “The Matrix” machines have taken over the world. Mankind has become a natural resource for the artificial intelligences (AI). Humans are grown in fields and their bodies are used as organic power sources (batteries) for the machines. In order to keep the humans under control, their minds are plugged into a virtual world (the matrix) they believe to be the reality. In the following two clips, Agent Smith, an AI, reveals what he thinks about the human race. Summarise and discuss the main ideas of his analysis. (Clips on LCE homepage)
2. Find out what the *Occupy Movement* is and in how far More’s ideals are relevant for their struggle.
3. More’s utopian ideas are said to have influenced Communist ideas of a classless society with communal ownership of property. Read through the 10 main points of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 and record similarities and differences between Thomas More’s and Karl Marx’s vision of society. Is Communism a utopia?

Communist Manifesto: <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=ten%20planks>

III. THE FUTURE, THE PRESENT AND THE PAST

Literary Theory – Theories of Reading



Literature and history

Dystopian novels often have a closer connection to reality than their utopian counterparts. This is because they are based on the principle of extrapolation. Hence, exploring the historical background that influenced and shaped an author's work leads to a deeper understanding of it. Most literary critics argue that literature and history cannot be separated.

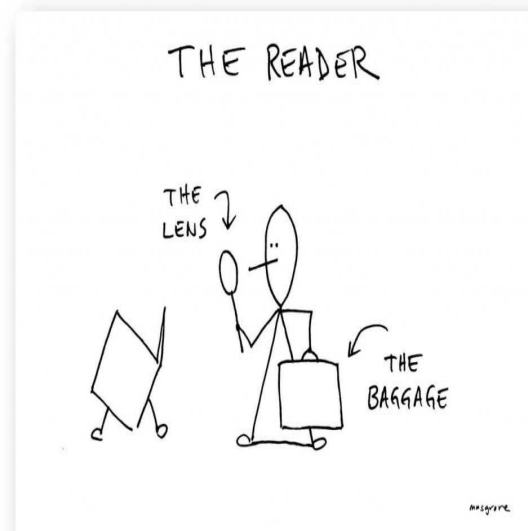
Activity 1:

Try and work out the most relevant economic, social and political forces that could have influenced the following novels, based on the information below. Then guess what dystopian fears might be dealt with in these literary works.

Author	Novel	Published
Aldous Huxley	<i>Brave New World</i>	1932
George Orwell	1984	1949

Gender, class and roots

According to literary theorist Wolfgang Iser, literature generates effects of meaning for the reader in a virtual space created between reader and text. In this virtual space, the worlds of the text and the reader clash. So, what the reader brings to a text is just as relevant as what the author offers. Our gender, class and roots automatically influence the way we read and have an impact on our meaning-making process. As a result, each reader experiences literature differently.



Activity 2:

Set up a timeline with 6 events of the 21st century that you think were the most relevant ones for the course of human history. Justify your choice.

Make a list of 5 people who you believe to have had the biggest impact on our society in the last 15 years. Justify your choice.

Compare your findings in class. Draw conclusions.

IV. CASE STUDIES

EXTRACT 1: ALDOUS HUXLEY – *BRAVE NEW WORLD*



Aldous Leonard Huxley (1894-1963) was a British writer widely known for his novel *Brave New World* (1932). The story is set in London in the year 2540 and is concerned with the impact of developments such as reproductive technology, social conditioning and sleep-learning on a future society. In the following extract, the Director of Hatching and Conditioning (D.H.C.) is conducting his new students round the various departments.

MR. FOSTER was left in the Decanting Room. The D.H.C. and his students stepped into the nearest lift and were carried up to the fifth floor.

INFANT NURSERIES. NEO-PAVLOVIAN CONDITIONING ROOMS, announced the notice board.

The Director opened a door. They were in a large bare room, very bright and sunny; for the whole of the southern wall was a single window. Half a dozen nurses, trousered and jacketed in the regulation white viscose-linen uniform, their hair aseptically hidden under white caps, were engaged in setting out bowls of roses in a long row across the floor. Big bowls, packed tight with blossom. [...]

The nurses stiffened to attention as the D.H.C. came in.

"Set out the books," he said curtly.

In silence the nurses obeyed his command. Between the rose bowls the books were duly set out—a row of nursery quartos opened invitingly each at some gaily coloured image of beast or fish or bird.

"Now bring in the children."

They hurried out of the room and returned in a minute or two, each pushing a kind of tall dumb-waiter laden, on all its four wire-netted shelves, with eight-month-old babies, all exactly alike (a Bokanovsky Group, it was evident) and all (since their caste was Delta) dressed in khaki.

"Put them down on the floor."

The infants were unloaded.

"Now turn them so that they can see the flowers and books."

Turned, the babies at once fell silent, then began to crawl towards those clusters of sleek colours, those shapes so gay and brilliant on the white pages. As they approached, the sun came out of a momentary eclipse behind a cloud. The roses flamed up as though with a sudden passion from within; a new and profound significance seemed to suffuse the shining pages of the books. From the ranks of the crawling babies came little squeals of excitement, gurgles and twitterings of pleasure.

The Director rubbed his hands. "Excellent!" he said. "It might almost have been done on purpose."

The swiftest crawlers were already at their goal. Small hands reached out uncertainly, touched, grasped, unpetaling the transfigured roses, crumpling the illuminated pages of the books. The Director waited until all were happily busy. Then, "Watch carefully," he said. And, lifting his hand, he gave the signal.

The Head Nurse, who was standing by a switchboard at the other end of the room, pressed down a little lever. There was a violent explosion. Shriller and ever shriller, a siren shrieked. Alarm bells maddeningly sounded. The children started, screamed; their faces were distorted with terror.

"And now," the Director shouted (for the noise was deafening), "now we proceed to rub in the lesson with a mild electric shock."

He waved his hand again, and the Head Nurse pressed a second lever. The screaming of the babies suddenly changed its tone. There was something desperate, almost insane, about the sharp spasmodic yelps to which they now gave utterance. Their little bodies twitched and stiffened; their limbs moved jerkily as if to the tug of unseen wires.

"We can electrify that whole strip of floor," bawled the Director in explanation. "But that's enough," he signalled to the nurse.

The explosions ceased, the bells stopped ringing, the shriek of the siren died down from tone to tone into silence. The stiffly twitching bodies relaxed, and what had become the sob and yelp of infant maniacs broadened out once more into a normal howl of ordinary terror.

"Offer them the flowers and the books again."

The nurses obeyed; but at the approach of the roses, at the mere sight of those gaily-coloured images of pussy and cock-a-doodle-doo and baa-baa black sheep, the infants shrank away in horror, the volume of their howling suddenly increased. "Observe," said the Director triumphantly, "observe." Books and loud noises, flowers and electric shocks—already in the infant mind these couples were compromisingly linked; and after two hundred repetitions of the same or a similar lesson would be wedded indissolubly. What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder.

"They'll grow up with what the psychologists used to call an 'instinctive' hatred of books and flowers. Reflexes unalterably conditioned. They'll be safe from books and botany all their lives." The Director turned to his nurses. "Take them away again." Still yelling, the khaki babies were loaded on to their dumb-waiters and wheeled out, leaving behind them the smell of sour milk and a most welcome silence.

One of the students held up his hand; and though he could see quite well why you couldn't have lower-cast people wasting the Community's time over books, and that there was always the risk of their reading something which might undesirably decondition one of their reflexes, yet ... well, he couldn't understand about the flowers. Why go to the trouble of making it psychologically impossible for Deltas to like flowers?

Patiently the D.H.C. explained. If the children were made to scream at the sight of a rose, that was on grounds of high economic policy. Not so very long ago (a century or thereabouts), Gammas, Deltas, even Epsilons, had been conditioned to like flowers—flowers in particular and wild nature in general. The idea was to make them want to be going out into the country at every available opportunity, and so compel them to consume transport.

"And didn't they consume transport?" asked the student.

"Quite a lot," the D.H.C. replied. "But nothing else."

Primroses and landscapes, he pointed out, have one grave defect: they are gratuitous. A love of nature keeps no factories busy. It was decided to abolish the love of nature, at any rate among the lower classes; to abolish the love of nature, but not the tendency to consume transport. For of course it was essential that they should keep on going to the country, even though they

hated it. The problem was to find an economically sounder reason for consuming transport than a mere affection for primroses and landscapes. It was duly found.

"We condition the masses to hate the country," concluded the Director. "But simultaneously we condition them to love all country sports. At the same time, we see to it that all country sports shall entail the use of elaborate apparatus. So that they consume manufactured articles as well as transport. Hence those electric shocks."

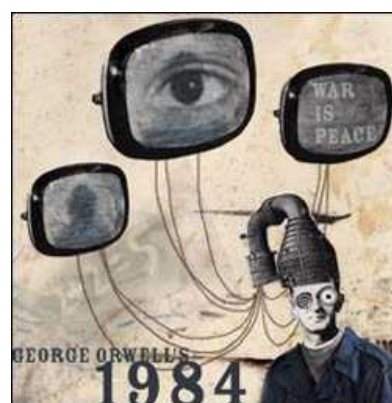
"I see," said the student, and was silent, lost in admiration.

COMPREHENSION

1. What is your initial response to this excerpt? Explain.
2. Who was Ivan Petrovich Pavlov?
3. Outline the different phases of the conditioning process presented in this extract.
4. Analyse the language that is used in this extract. What do you notice?
5. Which caste do the children belong to? What does this mean for their future?
6. What is the purpose of the conditioning process?
7. What is implied with the sentence "What man has joined, nature is powerless to put asunder"?
8. What is the secret of happiness in the society Huxley depicts here?

EXTRACT 2: GEORGE ORWELL - *1984*

Eric Arthur Blair (1903-1950) pen-named George Orwell, was an English author and journalist. His dystopian novel *1984* was published in 1949 and depicts life in Oceania, a totalitarian state run by a dictator called Big Brother. The rulers of Oceania have commissioned the creation of a new language, "Newspeak", which is meant to replace standard English by the year 2050. In the following lunchroom conversation, the novel's protagonist Winston Smith discusses Newspeak with one of the language experts involved in the project.



'How is the Dictionary getting on?' said Winston, raising his voice to overcome the noise.

'Slowly,' said Syme. 'I'm on the adjectives. It's fascinating.'

He had brightened up immediately at the mention of Newspeak. He pushed his pannikin aside, took up his hunk of bread in one delicate hand and his cheese in the other, and leaned across the table so as to be able to speak without shouting.

‘The Eleventh Edition is the definitive edition,’ he said. ‘We’re getting the language into its final shape — the shape it’s going to have when nobody speaks anything else. When we’ve finished with it, people like you will have to learn it all over again. You think, I dare say, that our chief job is inventing new words. But not a bit of it! We’re destroying words — scores of them, hundreds of them, every day. We’re cutting the language down to the bone. The Eleventh Edition won’t contain a single word that will become obsolete before the year 2050.’

He bit hungrily into his bread and swallowed a couple of mouthfuls, then continued speaking, with a sort of pedant’s passion. His thin dark face had become animated, his eyes had lost their mocking expression and grown almost dreamy.

‘It’s a beautiful thing, the destruction of words. Of course the great wastage is in the verbs and adjectives, but there are hundreds of nouns that can be got rid of as well. It isn’t only the synonyms; there are also the antonyms. After all, what justification is there for a word which is simply the opposite of some other word? A word contains its opposite in itself. Take “good”, for instance. If you have a word like “good”, what need is there for a word like “bad”? “Ungood” will do just as well — better, because it’s an exact opposite, which the other is not. Or again, if you want a stronger version of “good”, what sense is there in having a whole string of vague useless words like “excellent” and “splendid” and all the rest of them? “Plusgood” covers the meaning, or “doubleplusgood” if you want something stronger still. Of course we use those forms already. but in the final version of Newspeak there’ll be nothing else. In the end the whole notion of goodness and badness will be covered by only six words — in reality, only one word. Don’t you see the beauty of that, Winston? It was B.B.’s idea originally, of course,’ he added as an afterthought.

A sort of vapid eagerness flitted across Winston's face at the mention of Big Brother. Nevertheless Syme immediately detected a certain lack of enthusiasm.

'You haven't a real appreciation of Newspeak, Winston,' he said almost sadly. 'Even when you write it you're still thinking in Oldspeak. I've read some of those pieces that you write in "The Times" occasionally. They're good enough, but they're translations. In your heart you'd prefer to stick to Oldspeak, with all its vagueness and its useless shades of meaning. You don't grasp the beauty of the destruction of words. Do you know that Newspeak is the only language in the world whose vocabulary gets smaller every year?'

Winston did know that, of course. He smiled, sympathetically he hoped, not trusting himself to speak. Syme bit off another fragment of the dark-coloured bread, chewed it briefly, and went on:

'Don't you see that the whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought? In the end we shall make thoughtcrime literally impossible, because there will be no words in which to express it. Every concept that can ever be needed, will be expressed by exactly one word, with its meaning rigidly defined and all its subsidiary meanings rubbed out and forgotten. Already, in the Eleventh Edition, we're not far from that point. But the process will still be continuing long after you and I are dead. Every year fewer and fewer words, and the range of consciousness always a little smaller. Even now, of course, there's no reason or excuse for committing thoughtcrime. It's merely a question of self-discipline, reality-control. But in the end there won't be any need even for that. The Revolution will be complete when the language is perfect. Newspeak is Ingsoc and Ingsoc is Newspeak,' he added with a sort of mystical satisfaction. 'Has it ever occurred to you, Winston, that by the year 2050, at the very latest, not a single human being will be alive who could understand such a conversation as we are having now?'

'Except ——' began Winston doubtfully, and he stopped.

It had been on the tip of his tongue to say 'Except the proles,' but he checked himself, not feeling fully certain that this remark was not in some way unorthodox. Syme, however, had divined what he was about to say.

‘The proles are not human beings,’ he said carelessly. ‘By 2050 — earlier, probably — all real knowledge of Oldspeak will have disappeared. The whole literature of the past will have been destroyed. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron — they’ll exist only in Newspeak versions, not merely changed into something different, but actually changed into something contradictory of what they used to be. Even the literature of the Party will change. Even the slogans will change. How could you have a slogan like “freedom is slavery” when the concept of freedom has been abolished? The whole climate of thought will be different. In fact there will be no thought, as we understand it now. Orthodoxy means not thinking — not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness.’

COMPREHENSION

1. What is your initial response to this passage? Explain.
2. Summarise the main differences between Newspeak and Oldspeak.
3. What advantage does the state see in the creation of a new language?
4. “What sense is there in having a whole string of vague useless words like “excellent” and “splendid” and all the rest of them?” What would you reply to Syme’s question?
5. Explain the sentence “Orthodoxy is unconsciousness” and what are the implications of this?
6. Syme speaks of reality control through language. Can you think of any examples where language was/is used to manipulate the masses and/or distort the reality?
7. Listen to stand-up comedian George Carlin talk about “language that takes the life out of life”. Recall some of his best euphemisms and contrast them with the more offensive expression.

SHORT STORY:

YANN MARTEL - *WE ATE THE CHILDREN LAST* (2004)

The first human trial was on Patient D, a 56-year-old male, single and childless, who was suffering from colon cancer. He was a skeletal man with white, bloodless skin who could no longer ingest even clear fluids. He was aware that his



case was terminal and he waived all rights to legal redress should the procedure go wrong. His recovery was astounding. Two days after the operation, he ate six lunch meals in one sitting. He gained 24 kilos in two weeks. Clearly, his liver, pancreas and gall bladder, the source of greatest worry, had adapted to the transplant. The only side-effect noted at the time concerned his diet. Patient D rapidly came to dislike sweet dishes, then spicy ones, then cooked food altogether. He began to eat bananas and oranges without peeling them. A nurse reported that one morning she found him eating the flowers in his room.

The French medical team felt vindicated. Until then, the success rate of full-organ xenografts was zero; all transplants of animal organs to humans - the hearts, livers and bone marrow of baboons, the kidneys of chimpanzees - had failed. The only real achievement in the field was the grafting of pigs' heart valves to repair human hearts and, to a lesser extent, of pigs' skin on to burn victims. The team decided to examine the species more closely. But the process of rendering pigs' organs immunologically inert proved difficult, and few organs were compatible. The potential of the pig's digestive system, despite its biological flexibility, stirred little interest in the scientific community, especially among the Americans; it was assumed that the porcine organ would be too voluminous and that its high caloric output would induce obesity in a human. The French were certain that their simple solution to the double

problem - using the digestive system of a smaller, pot-bellied species of pig - would become the stuff of scientific legend, like Newton's apple. "We have put into this man a source of energy both compact and powerful - a Ferrari engine!" boasted the leader of the medical team.

Patient D was monitored closely. When asked about what he ate, he was evasive. A visit to his apartment three months after the operation revealed that his kitchen was barren; he had sold everything in it, including fridge and stove, and his cupboards were empty. He finally confessed that he went out at night and picked at garbage. Nothing pleased him more, he said, than to gorge himself on putrid sausages, rotten fruit, mouldy brie, baguettes gone green, skins and carcasses, and other soured leftovers and kitchen waste. He spent a good part of the night doing this, he admitted, since he no longer felt the need for much sleep and was embarrassed about his diet. The medical team would have been concerned except that his haemoglobin count was excellent, his blood pressure was ideal, and further tests revealed what was plain to the eye: the man was bursting with good health. He was stronger and fitter than he had been in all his life.

Regulatory approval came swiftly. The procedure replaced chemotherapy as the standard treatment for all cancers of the digestive tract that did not respond to radiotherapy.

Les Bons Samaritains, a lobby group for the poor, thought to apply this wondrous medical solution to a social problem. They suggested that the operation be made available to those receiving social assistance. The poor often had unwholesome diets, at a cost both to their health and to the state, which had to spend so much on medical care. What better, more visionary remedy than a procedure that in reducing food budgets to nothing created paragons of fitness? A cleverly orchestrated campaign of petitions and protests - " Malnutrition: zéro! Déficit: zéro! " read the banners - easily overcame the hesitations of the government.

The procedure caught on among the young and the bohemian, the chic and the radical, among all those who wanted a change in their lives. The

opprobrium attached to eating garbage vanished completely. In short order, the restaurant became a retrograde institution, and the eating of prepared food a sign of attachment to deplorable worldly values. A revolution of the gut was sweeping through society. "Liberté! Liberté! " was the cry of the operated. The meaning of wealth was changing. It was all so heady. The telltale mark of the procedure was a scar at the base of the throat; it was a badge we wore with honour.

Little was made at the time of a report by the Société protectrice des animaux on the surprising drop in the number of stray cats and dogs. Garbage became a sought-after commodity. Unscrupulous racketeers began selling it. Dumps became dangerous places. Garbage collectors were assaulted. The less fortunate resorted to eating grass.

Then old people began vanishing without a trace. Mothers who had turned away momentarily were finding their baby carriages empty. The government reacted swiftly. In a matter of three days, the army descended upon every one of the operated, without discrimination between the law-abiding and the criminal. The newspaper *Le Cochon Libre* tried to put out a protest, but the police raided their offices and only a handful of copies escaped destruction. There were terrible scenes during the round-up: neighbours denouncing neighbours, children being separated from their families, men, women and children being stripped in public to look for telling scars, summary executions of people who tried to escape. Internment camps were set up, nearly always in small, remote towns: Les Milles, Gurs, Le Vernet d'Ariège, Beaune-la-Rolande, Pithiviers, Recebedou.

No provisions were made for food in any of the camps. The story was the same in all of them: first the detainees ate their clothes and went naked. Then the weaker men and women disappeared. Then the rest of the women. Then more of the men. Then we ate those we loved most. The last known prisoner was an exceptional brute by the name of Jean Proti. After 41 days without a morsel of food except his own toes and ears, and after 30 hours of incessant screaming, he died.

I escaped. I still have a good appetite, but there is a moral rot in this country that even I can't digest. Everyone knew what happened, and how and where. To this day everyone knows. But no one talks about it and no one is guilty. I must live with that...

COMPREHENSION

1. Summarise the crucial phases in the development of Patient D.
2. Why was the development of Patient D considered a success by the medical experts?
3. What is your verdict on Patient D's development and the way the medical world reacted?
4. Explain how Patient D's medical solution suddenly turned into a social solution and a new trend. Then comment on your findings.
5. Explain why the public opinion on those with operations suddenly changed.
6. What did the government do to win back control of the situation? Comment on their methods.
7. How could the last paragraph of the story be interpreted given the times we live in?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Watch Andrew Cividino's movie adaptation of Martel's short story.
<https://www.shortoftheweek.com/2015/05/14/ate-children-last/>
or LCE homepage
2. Watch Hagen Rether explain the realities of our society. This might be helpful in relation to comprehension question 7.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iiDCNdsU4vI>
or LCE homepage

ESSAY TOPICS



1. Compare the dystopian fears that Huxley, Orwell and Martel brought forward to the ones that Barry / Atwood illustrate. What similarities can you find? What differences are there? Why?
2. Discuss the relationship between science, nature, economy, education and political power in reference to one of the works above.
3. Utopianism suffers from an image problem. Our society associates change and progress with danger and risk. Discuss.

V. FEAR OF THE FUTURE?

STEPHEN HAWKING: HUMANS AT RISK OF LETHAL "OWN GOAL" - David Shukman

Nuclear war, global warming and genetically-engineered viruses are among the scenarios he singles out. And he says that further progress in science and technology will create "new ways things can go wrong".

Prof Hawking is giving this year's BBC Reith Lectures, which explore research into black holes, and his warning came in answer to audience questions. He says that assuming humanity eventually establishes colonies on other worlds, it will be able to survive.

"Although the chance of a disaster to planet Earth in a given year may be quite low, it adds up over time, and becomes a near certainty in the next thousand or ten thousand years.

"By that time we should have spread out into space, and to other stars, so a disaster on Earth would not mean the end of the human race. "However, we will not establish self-sustaining colonies in space for at least the next hundred years, so we have to be very careful in this period." It is ironic that such a prominent figure in science identifies scientific progress itself as the major source of new threats.

On previous occasions, he has highlighted the potential risks of artificial intelligence (AI) becoming powerful enough to cause the extinction of the human race. But he insists that ways will be found to cope. "We are not going to stop making progress, or reverse it, so we have to recognise the dangers and control them. I'm an optimist, and I believe we can."

Asked for advice for young scientists, Prof Hawking said they should retain a sense of wonder about "our vast and complex" Universe. "From my own perspective, it has been a glorious time to be alive and doing research in theoretical physics. There is nothing like the Eureka moment of discovering something that no one knew before."

But he also said that future generations of researchers should be aware of how scientific and technological progress is changing the world, and to help the wider public understand it. "It's important to ensure that these

changes are heading in the right directions. In a democratic society, this means that everyone needs to have a basic understanding of science to make informed decisions about the future. "So communicate plainly what you are trying to do in science, and who knows, you might even end up understanding it yourself."

Since his diagnosis with motor neurone disease, Prof Hawking's determination to overcome the immense physical challenges of his disability has been a source of worldwide admiration and fascination. His daughter Lucy, a journalist and writer, who has co-written children's science books with Prof Hawking, was asked to explain his drive. "I think he's enormously stubborn and has a very enviable wish to keep going and the ability to summon all his reserves, all his energy, all his mental focus and press them all into that goal of keeping going," she said. "But not just to keep going for the purposes of survival, but to transcend this by producing extraordinary work, writing books, giving lectures, inspiring other people with neurodegenerative and other disabilities, and being a family man, a friend and a colleague to so many people and keeping up with friends across the world."

(<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-35344664>)

COMPREHENSION

1. List the problems Hawkings points out.
2. Discuss each problem and come up with possible solutions.
3. Why is Hawkings still optimistic about the future?
4. Discuss the morality of science and technology.

THE RISE OF ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS FOR SOCIETY - Amanda Gardner



Anti-intellectualism is defined by *Oxford Dictionary* as “a hostility or indifference to culture and intellectual reasoning.” In modern society, anti-intellectualism is not only on the rise, but it has also become de rigueur. This assertion is supported not only by the opinions of intellectuals but also by current academic, cultural, and political movements. Unfortunately for society, the rise of anti-intellectualism has numerous repercussions of which the majority of the population is completely unaware.

Historically, the rise of anti-intellectualism began during the Industrial Revolution. As industry began to play a larger role in the success of a population, academics began changing to fit the needs of business. For hundreds of years, the goal of the upper classes was a classical education, which resulted in a theoretical understanding of philosophy, literature, history, science, and the arts. During the Industrial Revolution, a theoretical education became less desirable than a practical education, and since that time, the educational systems in the West have continued moving more toward the practical. (...)

In the West, the dominion of anti-intellectualism, the value of a classical education appears forgotten, but its value is now greater than ever. A classical education gives rise to the ability to think subjectively, while a practical education can limit a student’s ability to thinking objectively. It is indeed of utmost importance for an engineer to know how to solve real-world problems using established scientific and mathematical laws; however, according to *Science* magazine, it is equally important for an engineer to have the ability to think creatively. In a list of “Ten Important Reasons to Include the Humanities in Your Preparation for a Scientific Career,” the study of the humanities provides the tools for lifelong learning, global understanding, and communication, to name only a few.

A perusal of online news often results in more stories of reality television's pseudo-celebrities than in real news. This rise in the amount of information on the lives and loves of those who are famous merely for being famous has resulted in a generation whose heroes do not possess great intelligence, bravery, courage, or goodness but, instead, great wealth gained through little to no effort. Thanks to the rise of anti-intellectualism, gone are the days when heroes were men and women like Franklin Roosevelt and Rosa Parks; today's heroes are celebrities like Kanye West and Donald Trump — both of whom embody all that is anti-intellectualism.

In fact, Trump's background in reality television and professional wrestling, along with his current political candidacy, makes him the best example of the rise of anti-intellectualism in existence. Although Trump earned a bachelor's degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, he not only exemplifies all that is anti-intellectualism, but he also glorifies it. Author, attorney, and activist David Niose recently affirmed his position on the connection between Trump and anti-intellectualism in an article in *Psychology Today*.

"...anti-intellectualism is at the root of much of the dysfunction in America today, and nowhere is it more evident than in the political realm...So even if Trump fades as many predict, clearly a large portion of the electorate is hungry for exactly what he offers. With other candidates across the country succeeding by taking stands that deny evolution and climate change while vilifying foreigners and beating the drum of militarism, there's little to suggest that the anti-intellectual trend is just a passing phase. This can't bode well for the direction of American society."

Those concerned with the rise and glorification of anti-intellectualism may want to consider the following questions: Will the rise of anti-intellectualism prevent the next generation of Americans from thinking creatively? If so, who will replace the great legal, scientific, and philosophical minds of today? Due to the influence of anti-intellectualism, will the next generation of Americans place more value on the Reality TV Awards than on the Pulitzer Prizes or the Nobel Prizes? Will American politics disintegrate

further and become an extension of today's celebrity-crazed culture? Will anti-intellectualism result in the country's eventual demise?

It is important for the members of American society who have concerns about the direction in which the country is headed to do their parts to combat the rise of anti-intellectualism. Thanks to social media, the influence of anti-intellectualism constantly enters our homes, schools, and minds. Lies presented as truths are being distributed at an alarming rate, and those lies are being accepted by the public even though accessing information is easier than ever before. To further the rise of anti-intellectualism, many Americans are questioning science in the name of religion, regressing to a time when claims that the Earth was round were considered blasphemous.

It is the job of those concerned with the rise of anti-intellectualism to work diligently to spread truth and knowledge in today's society, while ensuring the education the next generation receives facilitates creative thinking, an understanding of philosophy and history, and a refusal to allow the rise of anti-intellectualism to continue.

(<http://www.inquisitr.com/2917549/the-rise-of-anti-intellectualism-and-its-repercussions-for-society/>)


COMPREHENSION

1. What exactly are the repercussions of anti-intellectualism according to Amanda Gardner?
2. Explain the historical roots of anti-intellectualism.
3. Why are the humanities still important in a utilitarianist world?
4. Why is Trump so appealing to the masses according to David Niose?
5. How is anti-intellectualism spread across America?
6. Is anti-intellectualism an issue in Europe? Explain and give evidence for your claims.
7. Should the education system prepare you for a future job or for life? Discuss.
8. Why do you think is anti-intellectualism particularly dangerous in the political realm?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Watch (the beginning of) the movie "Idiocracy" by Mike Judge and draw parallels to today's world.
2. A society's degree of anti-intellectualism can be measured by the idols of the young generation.
3. *"There is a cult of ignorance in the United States, and there has always been. The strain of anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false notion that democracy means that 'my ignorance is just as good as your knowledge.'" Isaac Asimov. Discuss the meaning of this quote.*

PROJECTS

1. Watch the first part of the documentary *The Corporation (2003)*. Which picture of the corporation is painted by producers Achbar and Abbot? Are the directors exaggerating? Give more examples of corporate crime.
 
2. For the past ten years you have been an alien observer on earth. Your alien leader wants a full report on the human race. This report will help the leader decide if your alien race should make contact with humans. Write a report to state your case.
3. How will the world end? Come up with possible scenarios.
4. Alternative lifestyles: Find out more about alternative communities worldwide. (Auroville / ZEGG community...) Focus on:
 - their goals
 - their philosophy and motivation
 - policies and ideals
 - sustainability
 - and everything else that strikes your interest
5. Analyse the lyrics and/or video of one of the following songs: *Genesis – Land Of Confusion (1986)* / *Tool – Aenima (1996 / Attention: Explicit Lyrics)* / *Linkin Park – Burning In The Skies (2011)*
6. Read a dystopian short story and write a report on your favourite. Here's a good homepage with lots of short stories: <https://letterpile.com/misc/Dystopian-Short-Stories>

 (Sources: Utopia and Dystopia - Langenscheidt Viewfinder / Utopia and Dystopia – Cornelsen)