

Chlorophyll Presence:

An ecocritical reading of *We* and
Brave New World



*“Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane!”*
MacBeth, Act 5, Scene 5.

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Abstract

This research explores Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1924) and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), examining and comparing their contents in an ecocritical light, with an emphasis on the ecocritical notion of apocalypse. This thesis attempts to find how these novels can be read from an ecocritical perspective, and analyses where the differences with respect to apocalyptic ideas lie in these two novels. The topic will be studied by engaging with previous literature on ecocriticism and by analysing the two novels. Examining a relatively specialist subject such as dystopian fiction against the background of ecocriticism is something that has not been done extensively in the past, and thus could pave the way for future ecocritical studies of major works of fiction.

Keywords: ecocriticism, apocalypse, Zamyatin, *We*, Huxley, *Brave New World*.

Introduction

Humanity is in a permanent relationship with its surroundings. Mankind has impacted its environment for as long as it has been around. The environment has been affected to varying degrees, but it is generally considered that the industrial revolution marked the point where human impact became irrevocable and action had to be taken (Buell 3). The state of the environment is currently debated in political fora, both nationally and internationally, though the extent to which environmentally-conscious action can be taken on a large scale varies (Kerridge 87). The academic world developed its environmental concerns towards the end of the twentieth century. As a critical mindset it has only existed since as recently as the 1980s (Barry 239). Ecocriticism, like feminist criticism and Marxist criticism, is a politically charged method of analysis. An earth-centered agenda is generally visible within its criticism, as ecocriticism applies environmental and social concerns to its histories and non-fiction (Garrard 3). Ecocriticism is one of the more recent movements in literary criticism, and so the questions of scope and approach are still relatively fresh as well. Regardless, a common agenda for green studies can be made. Ecocritics consider where and how man interacts with nature, and what the effects are of these interactions. Distinctions can be made between various forms of ecocriticism: certain institutions such as the prominent Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) prefer to celebrate nature, whereas other groups such as the deep ecologists take a more cautionary approach, warning of the dangers human impact has on the environment, according to Peter Barry (241).

Ecocriticism studies the interaction between humanity and its environment, for better or worse. It does so by either looking back at fiction from previous centuries that deals with pre-industrial ideals (such as the pastoral form) or by examining contemporary issues regarding pollution and waste in recent or present-day literature (Garrard 2). Only seldom does ecocriticism look into the future. When it does, hypothetical futuristic scenarios are imagined and these images can serve as a warning against, for example, totalitarianism. It does so by examining the consequences of mismanagement in the past and present and the vast effects that would then have on the future.

This thesis explores one of those future-oriented approaches in ecocriticism, namely the apocalypse, by comparing and contrasting two modern novels: Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1924) and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). The usage of apocalypticism in ecocriticism examines crises in a potential future, to address problem in the present time (Garrard 86). It sees a contemporary issue, such as for example overpopulation, and explores a potential future in case no timely response to the crisis was found. Apocalyptic literature had already existed for a long time

before ecocriticism, as it is known today, was founded. In this time, roughly two-hundred years BC, it served predominantly to provide some degree of salvation to communities that felt threatened in their existence (Garrard 86), thereby also functioning as a form of escapism. Some outside force posed a real threat to these communities, and apocalyptic writing gave them hope for a better future. This can be described as historical apocalypticism, and is not synonymous with the apocalyptic as examined by this thesis.

There is a difference in framing between the historical and modern approach to the apocalypse: historical apocalyptic writing prefers to view “evil not as guilt, but as error” (O’Leary 68). Communities may have made mistakes in the eyes of their God, but by realising their mistake they can be saved. This is described by Peter Barry as the “comic” mode of apocalypticism (87). Christian writing especially functions within this comic mode, which entails that some form of catastrophe will occur, and that this is inevitable. Modern apocalypticism, conversely, sees evil through guilt and “its mechanism of redemption is victimage” (O’Leary 68). There is still a degree of inevitability, and characters must make a sacrifice at some point in the plot (Garrard 87). Modern apocalypticism still examines the future to inform about the present, but generally functions more as a warning than as a route to salvation (Garrard 93). An example of recent modern apocalyptic writing is Al Gore’s *Earth in the Balance* (1992). The movement from early apocalypticism to its current form has not, however, shifted away from apocalypticism’s emphasis on moral dualism, paranoia and the unveiling of truth (Garrard 86). These elements especially will form the basis for the analyses of both *We* and *Brave New World*. It is important to note that apocalyptic writing claims a prophetic role (Garrard 86), and therefore takes place in a future, compared to when the books were written.

The two novels are both set at some point in the future, use technology far beyond what was available in their time, and can be classified as science-fiction. Science-fiction as a literary genre traditionally deals with issues such as superpowers and holocausts, but has over time “[shifted to] those of ecological disaster” (Huffman 65). The relation between science-fiction writing and ecological concerns is not a recent phenomenon, and has existed for as long as the genre has been around, and the rhetoric of apocalypticism has served ecocriticism well (Garrard 93). The novels by Zamyatin and Huxley take place in a futuristic and imagined society, and it is helpful to examine what that fundamentally entails. The inhabited world, in both texts, functions as a dystopia. A dystopia, simply put, is a negative form of utopia. Utopia is an idealised, non-existent, community (Greene 1) built on desirable traits, with an emphasis on pleasant living (Garforth 105). In our modern era, one can point at any of H. G. Wells’ works of speculative and science-fiction novels for an adequate impression of what a utopian novel looks like (Sargent 275). The utopian societies emphasize perfection, choice and high standards of living for all their citizens.

Fiction allows us to examine the past and the present in order to consider future prospects (King 73). Utopian fiction is traditionally set in the future (or an indeterminable place in time otherwise). This placement in time allows its readers to infer where society might be going. The possibilities and consequences of the past and present are hypothesized in the potential future sketched by the author. Utopian fiction thus highlights our understanding of the present by moving forward in time and asking “What-if?” (King 75). In other words, utopian fiction presents a possible future. A positive utopia examines what happens when society moves toward a positive future, and a negative utopia examines what happens when society moves toward a negative future. A positive future can be defined as the above-mentioned idealised, pleasant environment, where everyone can live freely and equally. The negative future is the one portrayed by dystopian fiction. Dystopian fiction sets out to subvert the hypothetically perfect societies posited by utopian fiction. *Brave New World* especially began as a parodical work (Bedford 243). Dystopian fiction tends to have a satirical intention (Beauchamp 58), and is cautious of those claiming to have found a perfect way for structuring society (Bedford 244). Dystopian fiction functions as a method by which the future examines the present, as did utopian fiction. Zamyatin's *We* and Huxley's *Brave New World* are arguably the most prominent works of dystopian fiction (Beauchamp 58), and are therefore perfectly suited for analysis.

As we have seen, ecocriticism in its many forms considers past and present in a new light, which allows for Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* to be compared and contrasted by paying specific attention to the ecocritical notion of the apocalyptic future in these two novels of dystopian fiction. The question this thesis asks is: how does the ecocritical notion of the apocalypse present itself in *We* and *Brave New World*? I will look at aspects of apocalypticism, such as biblical references, impending disaster and revelations, and determine whether and how they appear in the novels. The differences between the two novels in this regard will also be examined. I anticipate that an ecocritical stance to *We* and *Brave New World* will provide a unique take on the novels, as such an approach has not been used before. A comparison of this scale has, as of yet, not been made. Concepts of nature exist in many forms in both *We* and *Brave New World*, and there are numerous ways of approaching them. The ways in which nature functions in the novels is something this thesis will explore in great detail; specifically, the way nature allows the apocalyptic imagery to present itself. The implicit considerations of the apocalyptic that the novels convey in regards to the environment is harder to predict, but I expect to find some form of environmentally-conscious sentiment to be present in both novels. The next chapter will be devoted to a broader overview of ecocriticism, followed by an outline of the methodology used in this thesis. In the two following chapters, the novels will be analysed: first *We*, and then *Brave New World*. Finally, a conclusion will be drawn from the analyses.

Ecocriticism and Methodology

It is important to have an understanding of ecocriticism's core concepts, key terms and general theory before explaining how this thesis will then apply the theory. What is ecocriticism, then? Ecocriticism is one of the more recent movements in literary criticism, so the questions of scope and approach are still fresh as well. To a certain extent, ecocriticism does not even have a fixed set of assumptions or doctrines (Barry 239). This is both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, there are countless angles of approach, and one can incorporate aspects from other theoretical frameworks: "History, geography and political philosophy are adequately represented in ecocritical work" (Parham xii). On the other hand, there is no unifying theory to fall back on. Regardless, a common agenda for green studies can be discovered, as will be shown later.

Ecocriticism at an early stage primarily celebrated "nature, life force and the wilderness as manifested in America" (Barry 240). A slight distinction can be made between American and British eco-literary research, though the terms for either (ecocriticism and green studies, respectively) can be used interchangeably. Differences lie largely in which types of text are focused on, and which tone is taken. The American approach tends to favour a more celebratory tone to nature's virtues. It examines how humanity could return to nature, focusing primarily on the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau (Westling 1). The British approach "warns us of environmental threats emanating from governmental, industrial, commercial, and neo-colonial forces" (Barry 242). The British mode therefore tends to be more reflective of the past, paying much attention to ideas of the pastoral in English Romantic, Renaissance and Greco-Roman literature (Westling 3). The pastoral focus on the idyllic, picturesque, rural way of life has been examined in great detail throughout ecocriticism's existence as an academic field, and it has been the way for ecocriticism to engage with the past, both as a mode of writing and as a critical theory (Garrard 33). Crucially, it has been found that the pastoral, too, is a political tool. There are other aspects of current ecocriticism that have a political implication as well, which will be elaborated on below. This thesis does not explore its primary sources only through the the pastoral tradition, instead focusing more on current concepts in ecocriticism as applied to dystopian fiction. The concepts around which the methodology is based are taken from modern ecocriticism.

Modern ecocriticism considers how and where man interacts with nature (as well as what definition of nature is), and what the effects of these interactions are. This consideration is exemplified by Barry's explanation of what nature is to ecocritics: "For the ecocritic, nature really exists, out there beyond ourselves, not needing to be ironised as a concept by enclosure within inverted commas, but as an entity which affects us and which we can affect, perhaps fatally, if we

mistreat it” (Barry 243). Ecocriticism presents an awareness of environmental issues and presents an “earth-centered approach to literary studies” (Glotfelty xix). The exact definition of this 'earth-centered' notion varies between the distinctive forms of ecocriticism, as will be shown below. Modern ecocriticism also analyses how texts function with regard to environmental crises: “Ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis” (Kerridge 5). This intention of ecocriticism as a theory in particular is a guiding principle for the method of analysis in this thesis. Though *We* and *Brave New World* are primarily works of dystopian fiction (Beauchamp 58), their value as a response to a potential environmental crisis at some point in the future is what this thesis is most interested in.

Ecocriticism as a critical theory shares some characteristics with other fields of study. Feminist criticism considers gender relations in literature, Marxist criticism highlights issues of class and production in literature and ecocriticism examines the relation between the physical environment and literature (Glotfelty xix). Like feminism and Marxism, ecocriticism is also a decidedly political mode of analysis, though it is more environmentally focused. It does, however, consider and adapt insights developed by other critical theories (Garrard 3). One of ecocriticism's key points of contention is the relation between humanity and its environment, and the degree to which nature exists (Barry 243). The second notion ties into popular literary theory ideas of the world as a socially constructed environment. For example, there is the feminist argument that one's sex is biologically determined, as opposed to gender, which is a social construction. Ecocriticism argues that any description or interpretation of nature would always be focused through a particular social group's interests and opinions, and is therefore biased. This includes the ecocritics as well (Barry 243). At the same time, ecocritics do believe that 'nature' exists as a living concept. While ecocritics, too, see their subject matter firmly from their own point of view, they nonetheless argue that nature is an entity in and of itself. It thereby partly “repudiates the foundational belief in constructedness” (Barry 243) that literary theory holds, by claiming its 'constructedness' in no way denies nature's existence.

There are several opinions on this relation the various branches convey. Firstly, and serving as a stepping stone, there is Environmentalism. As its name might imply, this is a very broad movement. Environmentalism generally argues that humanity has a largely negative influence on the world it inhabits; overpopulation and pollution are serious concerns and organisations affiliated with Environmentalism take frequent steps against ecological problems (Garrard 19). Environmentalism is so broad and general that it functionally does not say anything, and more radical forms of ecocriticism criticize its lacklustre methods and philosophy. Deep ecologists, for example, are of a much more radical strand. It is their opinion that humanity and its interests (including welfare) do not stand above the intrinsic value of nature itself (Garrard 21). They and

other radical approaches disapprove of the anthropocentric, human-centered, approach to life (Buell 20), preferring an ecocentric way of life. A key point in their philosophy is an emphasis on population control in both developing and developed countries (Garrard 21). Ecofeminism, another branch of ecocriticism, argues that environmental issues stem from the attribution of masculine ideals to the relation between humanity and its environment, thereby creating another androcentric (man-favoured) system of values (Garrard 183). Social ecology and eco-Marxism lament anthropocentrism, in a similar vein to deep ecology, but argue that changing current mindsets in politics and economy can solve most ecological problems. They wish to “change the political structure of society so that production to meet real needs replaces production for the accumulation of wealth” (Garrard 28), thereby preventing exhaustion of the earth. However, these are all philosophies, rather than actual methods of analysis. Opinions, references and starting points can be gleaned from them, but seldom do they provide a handbook for critical literary research. This thesis will therefore devise its own method, based on core ecocritical concepts rather than following a strict doctrine as set forth by any given branch of ecocriticism. I will do so by examining *We* and *Brave New World* through the ecocritical notion of the apocalypse.

Apocalypticism and Methodology

Since there is no definitive methodology for analysing literature from an ecocritical perspective, this thesis instead examines *We* and *Brave New World* by highlighting selected elements of apocalyptic writing. The apocalypse is presented as a crisis that will take place at some point in the future (Garrard 86); a crisis that sprung from contemporary issues. The end of the world in the future, in that sense, is made avoidable by taking appropriate action now. This is what apocalyptic literature sets out to achieve. Non-fiction works of apocalyptic writing tend to paint a black-or-white picture, and readily assign culpability (Garrard 95). By looking at elements of apocalyptic rhetoric as seen in works of fiction, an ecocritical angle becomes visible. This thesis explores apocalyptic tropes as they appear in the two texts and discovers which ecocritical message they bear.

There is a distinction between old (that is, Christian and pre-Christian) apocalypticism and modern forms. The older forms adopted a more accepting stance to the end of times (Garrard 87). Broadly speaking, humanity would welcome the apocalypse as “a permanent release from captivity” (Thompson 14), in other words, freedom and salvation. This is arguably a positive attitude towards the end times, and it tends to be paired with a belief in an afterlife. Modern apocalypticism did find its origins in the apocalyptic writings of the past as is indicated through the usage of Biblical imagery from an ecological perspective. Finding Biblical themes, allusions or direct quotes is by no means groundbreaking literary research, but applying ecocritical theory to

examine the interaction between various characters and their environment should provide new insight. Therefore, this thesis examines the way *We* and *Brave New World* approach biblical descriptions of the apocalypse. Biblical references as found in the novels will be examined with ecological implications in mind.

Apocalypticism typically has its characters make a large sacrifice at some point during the plot (O'Leary 68). The trope of sacrifice is a remnant of how the apocalypticism of the past unveiled truth to its characters (Thompson 13). The consequences of the sacrifice vary, but exploring the effect the sacrifice has on the plot as well as the novel's grander ecocritical message should prove interesting. The relation to ecocriticism may seem elusive, but an important aspect of ecocritical theory is to bring awareness to the consequences of human interaction. Therefore, exploring this major apocalyptic theme is of value to an ecocritical analysis, as it examines what occurs beyond the strictly textual.

These are the themes this thesis will attempt to find in Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. It will highlight and examine the above tropes and apply ecocritical theory to them. The books already serve as a warning against a potential future through their context of dystopian fiction, and this thesis examines the ecocritical side of the argument. The use of an angle that engages with apocalyptic imagery highlights the extent of human influence on its surroundings and amplifies the strength of the novels as cautionary works of literature.

Ecocritical Perspectives on *We*

Yevgeny Zamyatin was born in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century, his father was a priest in the Russian Orthodox church and his mother a musician. Zamyatin was politically engaged, returning to Russia after staying in England for a year in order to support the revolution, and he wrote for various Marxist newspapers for an extended period of time. By then, Zamyatin had already written and published several stories (Fokkema 302). The Soviet government can be at least partially blamed for Zamyatin's relative obscurity: they had made attempts to erase him from their history, as he became one of the first 'unpersons' of the Soviet Union (Collins 9). Though he originally supported the October Revolution, he disagreed with the bolshevik's increasing use of censorship and severed all ties with the party in later life. Zamyatin became a member of various anti-Lenin/anti-Soviet groups (Hutchings 88) In this time he wrote "I Am Afraid", where he says that "true literature can exist only where it is created, not by diligent and trustworthy officials, but by madmen, hermits, heretics, dreamers, rebels and skeptics (reprinted in Ponomareff 181).

Bureaucratic officials had no business writing literature, according to Zamyatin. These opinions made him unpopular with the Soviet party, and Zamyatin was forced to smuggle his manuscript of *We* into New York. This is the reason *We*, while originally written in Russian, was first published in English. It took until 1988 for *We* to finally be issued in Russia (Fokkema 302). Though it is predominantly a work of dystopian fiction (Beauchamp 58), it has an ecocritical angle which can be explored through the novel's apocalyptic imagery. The following analysis employs the explanation of ecocriticism's attitude to nature as put forward by Peter Barry: nature is an entity in and of itself. While it may not be directly tangible, it affects humans and humanity affects it (Barry 243). The environment exists as a credible factor in and of itself, rather than just being a background for any given conflict. To an ecocritic, the well-being of nature is itself crucial, and human impact on it is an important aspect of the text (Buell 8).

We tells the story of D-503, an engineer living in the futuristic One State. The novel functions as a diary for the main character, who occasionally directly addresses his unspecified reader: "Maybe you unknown people who'll get my notes when the INTEGRAL brings them" (Zamyatin 11). The diary form shows signs of a stream-of-consciousness writing style, as D-503 is interrupted in his musings at times, even though he is writing his thoughts down for future use. D-503 may be writing on one topic, be interrupted, and then write and narrate in real-time on current events: "...that can only mean one thing: that from time immemorial the instinct of nonfreedom has been as organic part of man, and that we, in our present-day life, are only deliberately...I'll have to finish this later: The intercom just clicked. I lift my eyes: O-90, of course." (Zamyatin 6) O-90 is D-

503's romantic partner. In the One State, romantic partners can be requested at a bureau, as One State does not believe in envy (and by extension, love). The official policy of the state is that "Any Number has the right of access to any other Number as sexual product" (Zamyatin 22). Citizens are referred to as Numbers, by both the state and D-503. The One State has a strict mathematical approach to ordering their society. Every occupation and all schedules are set by (and in other cases approved by) the state. The exception to this are the Personal Hours, from 16:00 to 17:00 and 21:00 to 22:00 every day. D-503 laments these unstructured hours in the day, and wishes that these hours, too, could be ordered more strictly: "One day, all 86,400 seconds will be on the Table of Hours" (Zamyatin 13). These Personal Hours are the only time during which the blinds in people's apartments may be lowered, and it is the only time they truly have privacy. D-503's thoughts on this overall lack of privacy are telling of the general population's attitude towards constant surveillance by the Guardians, the secret service: "We have nothing to hide from one another. Besides, this makes it easier for the Guardians to carry out their burdensome, noble task. No telling what might go on otherwise" (Zamyatin 19). The state has a firm hold on the population and this is accepted. Music and other arts do exist in the world of One State: music is allowed to exist as it is a result of a mathematical composition and poetry sings the praise of the Benefactor (dictator) and the One State. It is mentioned how effortlessly music can be produced by using machines that the scientists have made, obviating the need for human creativity. More importantly, the mathematically constructed music serves to remove "inspiration – some unknown form of epilepsy" (Zamyatin 18) from mankind.

D-503 is the main engineer and designer of the INTEGRAL, the spacecraft designed to spread One State's philosophy to other planets. As he is musing on the beauty of mathematics and walking with his partner O-90, he meets a woman known as I-330, who immediately draws his interest. She invites D-503 to a lecture on primitive society, where D-503 has his first encounter with (non-mathematical) inspiration, which upsets him greatly. Later, D-503 explains how the world came to be in its current state: world hunger has been solved following the 200-Years War: during the war, petroleum-based food was invented. It was the war fought "between the City and the Country", where the One State established the Green Wall, separating the urban, scientific, state from the primitive, rural, outside world. However, the cost of the war was high, as an estimated 80% of the world population perished. Ever since the war, the One State has had a strict isolationist approach to the rest of the world. This has had the unfortunate side-effect of making it difficult to determine how large the outside world actually is. One State has 10 million inhabitants, but the actual size of the outside world cannot be discerned. The One State has enforced its isolationist ideal by building a massive wall made of glass around itself: this Green Wall is designed to keep out all outside forces, including pollen, and Numbers generally know very little of what goes on on the

other side of the Wall. Only revolutionaries and dissidents have any knowledge of the world beyond the Wall.

Occasionally, the State finds one of these dissidents and publicly executes punishments for interfering “with the progress of the great State machine” (Zamyatin 25). While this happens, D-503 is escorted by I-330 to the Ancient House (a remnant of a civilization like our own), in an attempt to persuade D-503 to change his viewpoint on science and art, albeit unsuccessfully. D-503 worries that I-330 is likely not acting alone, but worries even more that his own unwavering belief in the One State and the mathematical ordering of the universe may be shaking, as he experiences his first dream. D-503 decides after all not to report I-330 to the authorities. Failure to report a crime swiftly is itself a crime, which I-330 uses to blackmail D-503 into drinking liquor, which is also illegal. I-330 continues to have a devastating effect on D-503's mind and he “is so much in her power that we do anything she asks” (Fokkema 306). It becomes clear at this stage that envy and love are by no means eradicated in the One State, as D-503 finds that R-13 (among others) has also been with I-330. As the story progresses it becomes apparent that there is some underground organisation working to undermine the One State and the building of the INTEGRAL, and I-330 is deeply involved.

The initial plan of the Mephi (the revolutionaries) is to vote against the Benefactor's rule on the Day of Unanimity, where traditionally all Numbers vote for the Benefactor to remain the sole head of state. Their votes are deemed absurd and are dismissed, with the newspaper implying the police have taken care of the dissidents. Shortly after this, I-330 invites D-503 over to the other side of the Green Wall, where he learns of their plan to seize control of the INTEGRAL, so that the One State cannot extend its influence to other planets. She tells D-503 how a number of people have escaped the forced relocation to the One State after the 200-Years War, and have lived with nature ever since:

“You almost knew all this?”

“Almost, yes.”

“But you didn't know, only very few knew, that a small part of them managed to survive and went on living there, on the other side of the Walls. They were naked and went into the forest. There they learned from the trees, animals, birds, flowers, sun.”

(Zamyatin 158)

Here, *We* seems to indicate a desire for humanity to go back to a pre-industrial way of life, where men learn from the flora and fauna around them. The specifically non-urban aspects of life outside the Wall are highlighted through this use of pastoral imagery. This opposition helps to

juxtapose the rural community outside the Green Wall and the scientific, urbanised One State.

Continually, I-330 implies that D-503 is necessary to complete the revolution, as he can provide them access to the INTEGRAL. However, The One State has developed a 'cure' for the last human aspect of selfhood: removing the imagination from the brain. Through this “fantasectomy” (Wegner 100) the people will obey without question. The day before the Operation the INTEGRAL makes its test flight, where the Guardians learn that the revolutionaries will attempt to seize control of the spacecraft. I-330 believes D-503 has sold them out, though it was actually his secretary that called the authorities, after reading D-503's diary. The One State eventually forces most of the population to undergo the Operation, but the revolutionaries have already broken through the Green Wall. D-503 tells the state everything he knows about the Mephi as a consequence of the Operation, and I-330 is caught and tortured. Despite this, the revolution is not stopped, and the now lobotomised D-503 laments how the One State has to win the war with the outsiders, and has already begun fighting back. It is implied that the fight will be difficult.

Descriptions of nature are in an odd place in *We*. The book is told through the diary of D-503, and whenever there is a description of the environment or the Green Wall it is funnelled through his opinion. It is therefore a biased view, and largely follows One State doctrine. His opinions are coloured, as can be seen through the description of a simple cloud: “those absurd, untidy clumps of mist, idiotically jostling one another about. I love – and I am sure that I am right in saying *we* love – only such a sky as this one today: sterile and immaculate” (Zamyatin 5). Until his viewpoints change late in the novel, D-503 has an antagonistic view towards the unbridled character of nature, exemplified through his desire for walls. While on a walk alongside the Green Wall, he notes the savage roots and branches that would envelop the city if the Green Wall had not been built: “Fortunately, between me and the wild green ocean was the glass of the Wall. [...] It is perhaps the most magnificent of all inventions. Man ceased to be an animal when he built the first wall” (Zamyatin 91). This opposition between man and animal D-503 paints casts new light on one of his fears: his own primate-like appearance. Man may have ceased to be an animal when they built the first wall, their appearance has barely changed, and everything that made them animal is still visible: “Or is it my own paws bothering me, the fact that they've been in front of my eyes so long, these shaggy paws? [...] They're a holdover from the savage era. Can it really be true that I contain...” (Zamyatin 23). It is difficult to discern whether or not anything organic that D-503 sees that upsets him is particularly strange, as he has been taught from birth to distrust the wild and free. D-503 notes how one has to be eased into a strange world: “And now I see why I-330 always insisted on holding something back: I wouldn't have believed it anyway – not even her” (Zamyatin 149). This could be read as a reaction against radical ecologists: the massive political upheaval and change in societal structure they strive towards has to be developed carefully. A sudden shift or

forced conversion to an ecofriendly lifestyle will likely be hard to accept. It is possible Zamyatin's anti-radical position here was directed at contemporary radical ecologists.

We makes extensive use of biblical references, which is an aspect of apocalyptic writing. Apocalyptic writing warns its readers of an impending catastrophe that takes place at some point in the future (Garrard 86), and in *We* this was the 200-Years War. Roughly eighty percent of the world population has died and the rest live in the One State. The residents of the One State believe that their way of life is akin to life in Paradise. When provided with a choice between total freedom and total happiness (the choice presented by the One State), the people in *We* choose happiness. D-503's best friend, the state poet R-13, muses on this:

The old legend about Paradise – that was about us, about right now. Yes! Just think about it. Those two in Paradise, they were offered a choice: happiness without freedom, or freedom without happiness, nothing else. Those idiots chose freedom. And then what? Then for centuries they were homesick for the chains. For ages! And we were the first to on the way to get back to happiness [...] We helped God finally overcome the Devil – because that's who it was that pushed people to break the commandment and taste freedom and be ruined. (Zamyatin 61)

The crucial difference is that Paradise is now in the city, rather than in the garden. R-13, the speaker in the quote above, speaks for and is indoctrinated by the state, and as such his speech is in line with One State philosophy (until he changes sides later in the novel). Though R-13 implies that they (the residents of the One State) were offered a choice between freedom and happiness, they were forced to integrate with the state: “A hollow wailing sound hung over the black endless lines of those who were being driven into the city, to be saved by force and taught happiness” (Zamyatin 158). This is in contrast with the freedom outside the Green Wall, which D-503 only discovers later. There is complete freedom of choice in that natural, unstructured world, though one has to find one's own happiness. To the indoctrinated mind of the Numbers in One State, this would be a hellish life. However, people can break free of the indoctrination, either by a natural development or through temptation by others. D-503 is initially content in his structured life, and only when his mind becomes infused with individualistic ideas does he waver. I-330 functions as the serpent that tempts D-503 away from the urban Paradise. When D-503 first meets I-330, he immediately notices a certain aspect of her appearance: “Before my eyes were teeth – white, uncommonly white, sharp teeth” (Zamyatin 8), a characteristic of her D-503 mentions from time to time. Furthermore, after consummating their love, I-330 tells D-503: “Well, fallen angel. Now you're ruined” (Zamyatin 73). With this motif in mind, it would seem that the One State takes on the role of God, restricting what

Adam and Eve can and cannot do. The Numbers are all Adam and Eve: “We're simple and innocent again, like Adam and Eve. None of those complications about good and evil” (Zamyatin 61). More specifically, D-503 is Eve in this case, as he is the one tempted by the serpent I-330.

We explains that humanity has to change its ideals for it to consider a strict urban society as perfect. Though the State for a long time enforces the strict separation of man and the natural world, that natural world will always find a way back in, either through an insurrection by revolutionaries or literal cracks in the wall. This is made possible in the text through the Mephi. They organise the rebellion against One State's dominant grip:

All of you know that the day has come when we will demolish this Wall, all walls, so that a green wind may sweep all across the earth, from one end to the other. [...] No, brothers! Not down with in. the INTEGRAL must be ours. On that day when it launches into the heavens for the first time – we will be on board. (Zamyatin 151)

Thereby the book explains how humanity cannot deny its co-existence with the environment: no amount of control can ever eliminate the outside world. Not even when the state subjects its Numbers to an operation that removes the soul or the imagination can they claim to have conquered humanity's need for the natural world. Although the One State has brainwashed its subjects into believing their world is Paradise, it still feels the undeniable existence of the world they despise. The State exerts a large degree of control over its citizens and the world they inhabit, and this has upset a natural balance. In the words of D-503: “it's the same as with scales – you overload one side and then you can put as much as you want there and the pointer wont budge” (Zamyatin 150). One side of the scales has gone completely overboard, and adding to that scale will have little effect. The only way to force a return to stability is by adding to the other scale, the scale of freedom and the environment. I-330 believes that D-503 and the One State want to live in a state of constant balance, and that she with the Mephi are agents of change and movement: “Look-there are two forces in the world, entropy and energy. One of them leads to blissful tranquillity, to happy equilibrium. The other leads to the disruption of equilibrium” (Zamyatin 159). From an ecocritical point of view, this is incorrect: the balance that the One State enforces is terribly skewed to one side, and the Mephi are a natural response summoned to bring back balance. The Mephi may be claiming to upset the balance, but in fact they are creating it.

As has been established, warning of an impending catastrophe is a central theme in apocalyptic writing, but *We* takes it one step further. The 200-Years' War was definitely a global disaster, and it made the world in *We* what it is. However, *We* is as much about that dramatic rebalancing of the world as it is about future changes to the world. This idea is realised through I-

330. She challenges D-503's government-approved strict mathematical approach to life by asking him what the final number is:

“The what? I...I don't understand. What final number?”

“You know – the last one, the top, the absolute biggest.”

“But, I-330, that's stupid. Since the number of numbers infinite, how can there be a final one?”

“And how can there be a final revolution? There is no final revolution. The number of revolutions is infinite.” (Zamyatin 168)

We hereby upsets the traditional apocalyptic rhetoric of an impending disaster, by creating more than one of them. It shows the limitations humanity has in attempting to control naturally occurring events: there can be no final number or final revolution, and attempts to contain the inevitable revolutions result in self-destruction. The only way the One State can contain the insurrection is by forcibly removing aspects of humanity from its citizens, and even then “in the western quarters is still chaos, roaring, corpses, animals, and, unfortunately, quite a lot of Numbers who have betrayed reason” (Zamyatin 225). Continually throughout the novel, attempts to contain human nature, natural development and the need for revolution have resulted in the weakening of One State's position and stability. Another way the difficulty of limitation is shown is through I-330: she functions as a representation of the outside world seeping back into structured One State. The state only succeeds in capturing her after D-503 tells the Benefactor everything he knows following the Operation. Other agents of Mephi confess, but I-330 refuses even then to tell anything. There is only so much the One State can undertake before losing whatever humanity it had left; it self-destructs, and has to make way for a new world.

Themes of revelation and sacrifice are present in Zamyatin's *We*. There is more than one eye-opening revelation for D-503, and both result in a change to his actions. The first revelation occurs when I-330 takes D-503 beyond the Green Wall, past the Ancient House and into the outside world. The idea that there is a vibrant community so vastly different from his own where people can still be happy, shocks him. D-503 was indoctrinated from birth to believe that only the One State's rule can provide true happiness, so when this turns out to be a false dogma he is understandably shaken. At this point, I-330 justifies her revolution by appealing to the existence of a spectrum of “... entropy and energy, one leading to blissful balance and tranquillity, the other to disturbance of that equilibrium and to perpetual movement” (Fokkema 307). I-330 places the state-enforced bliss on the one hand, and the outside world's need for unbridled growth on the other hand. More or less convinced by her words, he acquiesces to helping the Mephi seize the INTEGRAL. This revelation

is related to the ideas of Paradise explained earlier. Revealing a grand truth to the people is an historic aspect of apocalyptic writing and the Fall of Man is an example of this, through the words of the serpent when it offers the fruit of knowledge: “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (King James Version, Genesis 3:5).

The second revelation is one that is hinted at during various stages throughout the novel, namely that I-330 has ulterior motives in establishing a relationship with D-503. She slowly lures him into visiting the outside world and opening his mind to alternative world views. The actual revelation occurs just after D-503's secretary has reported his involvement with the revolution to the One State police. D-503 receives a phone call from the Benefactor himself, urging him to come to his office. The Benefactor berates him for opposing the happiness that the One State so generously provides: “They want someone to tell them, once and for all, what happiness is – and then to bind them to that happiness with a chain. What is it we're doing right now, if not that?” (Zamyatin 207). He tells D-503 that it is likely that the revolutionaries are only using him to gain access to the INTEGRAL: ““Listen – did it never once cross your mind that they [...] that they need you only as the Builder of the INTEGRAL, only so that you...” “Don't! Don't!” I shouted” (Zamyatin 207). Though there were signs of this throughout the story, D-503 ignored them and pursued his foolhardy love. D-503 initially denies the possibility that I-330 faked her love to get D-503 to do her bidding and support the revolution. He is initially cautious and doubtful of their rhetoric and acts on their behalf solely to further his relationship with I-330. The discovery that she has little interest in him beyond access to the INTEGRAL results in D-503 running to the bureau of the Guardians to tell them everything he knows about the revolution (telling them ends up being a futile endeavour for several reasons).

These two revelations tie into the major sacrifices *We* considers in its text. The first revelation shows the existence of an outside world and presents the choice between happiness and freedom. D-503 and most other Numbers cannot really make this choice, as the One State has made it for them. The Benefactor laments how the sacrifices they were forced to make were essentially pointless, given mankind's need for change (this is what I-330's spectrum of equilibrium versus movement refers to as well, see above). Seeing the futility of One State's actions, the Benefactor then reveals how the revolution merely used D-503. D-503 willingly sacrifices his humanity by undergoing the Operation, in order to cope with knowing I-330 did not really care for him. He is reduced to a hollow shell at the end of the book, blindly following the party line and barely recognizing I-330 as she is tortured to death. Undoubtedly the revelation and sacrifices have an effect on the plot, but there is an implicit message on environmental awareness embedded into the narrative here. The environmentally-conscious message of I-330 and the Mephi is sound, but the

method with which one brings this message has to be genuine: if it is delivered under false pretences or the speaker (I-330 in this case) has ulterior motives in speaking to you, the listener may feel betrayed, or used, and effecting environmental change becomes difficult. Unless your argument is delivered adequately, the people might reject it, even if what is being said is valid.

Apocalypse and Nature in *Brave New World*

Aldous Huxley was born into a family of intellectuals, with many prominent ancestors on both his father's and his mother's side of the family tree. Aside from a few deaths in the family in his early life, Huxley's childhood was rather uneventful. His biography by Bedford describes him as being aloof and very intelligent, even among his peers. Notably, Huxley began suffering from severe pain in his eyes (Bedford 32). He was temporarily blinded, though his sight did return in time. The damage had been done, however, and his sight would never fully recover. On a side note, this also exempted him from being conscripted in the First World War, as he was declared "totally unfit" (Bedford 62). Huxley took on various jobs in the coming years, including a brief spell as a teacher of English and Latin, though it was not a great success. Among his numerous jobs was time spent at a chemical plant in Billingham, where the idea formed for a novel in a completely structured universe (Baggini 86). Apart from *Brave New World*, Huxley mainly wrote political satire during the earlier part of his writing career. Huxley also wrote a great deal on mysticism and the use of psychedelics as time went on, for example, his pivotal essay *The Doors of Perception* (1954). Though Huxley was accused several times of plagiarism in writing *Brave New World*, he had always strenuously denied these claims (Hutchings 81). George Orwell writes in a 1946 review of *We* that "... Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* must be partly derived from it". There is no current consensus on the degree of influence with various biographers such as Alex Shane, Christopher Collins and D. J. Richards all disagreeing (see Hutchings 81). It is likely that *We* served, at most, as an inspiration to Huxley, if he knew of the book at all. If anything, Huxley noted Wells' ideas and provided a counterpoint with *Brave New World* (Bedford 241). The book is similar in tone and intention to *We*, and the method of analysis used below will be the same as the one in *We*.

Brave New World is ostensibly very similar to *We*, but on close examination vast differences can be found, on both a surface level and when one applies an ecocritical analysis. The novel opens by introducing its world rather than its characters. An industrial plant in London is described, one where people are grown, rather than products are made. In the carefully designed world of 632 A.F. (After Ford), there is no place for natural growth. Babies are no longer born, and mentioning mothers and fathers is (respectively) obscene and laughable, as the novel demonstrates when an authority figure is confronted with his estranged wife, who has given birth: "'I was its mother.'" She flung the obscenity like a challenge into the outraged silence" (Huxley 128). The nation's birthrate is easily managed, and can be altered depending on the needs for more people, through the Bokanovsky Process:

One egg, one embryo, one adult – normality. But a bokanovskified egg will bud, will proliferate, will divide. From eight to ninety-six buds, and every bud will grow into a perfectly formed embryo, and every embryo into a fully-sized adult. Making ninety-six human beings grow where only one grew before. Progress. (Huxley 18)

Through the process of Bokanovsky, the natural course of human procreation is upset, and greatly sped up. This has the added effect of generating extremely identical-looking people, and 'twins' can refer to up to ninety-six people at a time. The motto of this controlled world is stability, and the design of the civilized world reflects this. Everything around and in a person is predetermined by rigorous indoctrination in early life and the influencing of the body during embryonic and infantile state. In the plant, the workers determine how much of any given substance, be it oxygen, alcohol or something else entirely, is needed for a child's development at that stage.

This process is not used to create a nation of Übermenschen, but to create a hierarchical society with a relatively small amount of thinkers, administrators and scientists at the top (the Alphas), and progressively larger groups of humans for increasingly menial tasks (from Betas to Epsilons). Those that have a job involving little skill and little intelligence are bred accordingly. The respective groups of the population are shaped according to the roles they will fulfil in life, with no room for growth: “Hence, of course, that fruit of delayed development, the human intelligence. “But in Epsilons,” said Mr. Foster very justly, “we don't need human intelligence.” Didn't need it and didn't get it” (Huxley 25). If the state decides that steelworkers do not need to understand how bread is made, then they never will understand. Every member of every group has been indoctrinated through manipulations of body chemicals and the use of sleep hypnosis. As a result, even those that spend their lives cleaning sewers are content in doing so, to the extent that doing something else (or nothing at all) will make them very unhappy. There was even an experiment to have the lower-caste work fewer hours every day:

Technically, it would be perfectly simple to reduce all lower-caste working hours to three or four a day. But would they be any the happier for that? No, they wouldn't. [...] Those three and a half hours of extra leisure were so far from being a source of happiness, that people felt constrained to take a holiday from them. (Huxley 186)

A major departure from Zamyatin's *We* is the origin of the state: in *We* it was the result of a war likely started by what would become the One State and the mass relocation that followed it, in *Brave New World* the controlled state was phased in over time, initially as an alternative to dying from the rampant destruction by anthrax bombs. By controlling the people's every desire, the need

for conflict was removed. The book is not clear on how this was achieved, or who was throwing the anthrax bombs, but it is likely that the current government consists of direct descendants of whomever threw most bombs during the Nine Years' War. In *We*, the conquering One State enforced its philosophy with an iron fist: “A hollow wailing sound hung over the black endless lines of those who were being driven into the city, to be saved by force and taught happiness” (Zamyatin 158), in *Brave New World* new generations were educated to agree with the new superpower. The control exerted by the state initially served to dull the pain caused by the war. The destructive potential of contemporary science had to be limited somehow:

What's the point of truth and beauty or knowledge when the anthrax bombs are popping all round you. [...] People were ready to have even their appetites controlled then. Anything for a quiet life. We've gone on controlling ever since (Huxley 189-190).

The Nine Years' War, like the 200-Years War in *We*, took place hundreds of years before the events portrayed in the books. So in both novels, the apocalyptic theme of an impending disaster is used as an event which has, to the characters in the novel, already passed, and the current state of affairs is the aftermath. Here is where the novels could not be more at opposing ends: *We* as a state is heading towards an inevitable second and further revolution, but *Brave New World* exists in an enforced state of entropy.

The government in *Brave New World* desires stability and a maintaining of the status quo. This is evident from the conditioning messages children of all ages and castes receive in their sleep therapy: ““Yes, everybody's happy now,” echoed Lenina. They had heard the words repeated every night for twelve years” (Huxley 71). Lenina, lover of protagonist Bernard Marx and rival Henry Foster, echoes these words after commenting on the hierarchy in their society, in which every member is content in their position. Note that everyone in civilised London has a name that refers to scientists, politicians, and in some cases, playwrights or poets. On the topic of Lenina having multiple lovers, this is a theme it shares with *We*, with even the state motto's being nearly identical: we may just compare *Brave New World's* “everyone belongs to everyone else” (Huxley 44) to *We's* “any Number has the right of access to any other Number as sexual product” (Zamyatin 22). In Huxley's novel, status quo is reflected in the opposition between urban London and the savage reservation (named Malpais, located near New Mexico) Bernard and Lenina visit: there is limited contact, but travel expeditions and holidays into the reservations are allowed. Due to their conditioning, however, most people simply do not want to go there. The state is firmly aware of the way of life in the reservation but leaves its inhabitants to their own devices. The government did

build a fence around the reservation to prevent the savages from leaving, though.

The fence is used to highlight the opposition between the wilderness of the reservation and the urban city life in London. On the civilised side of the fence, life is structured to an immense degree. People's occupations are decided at birth, and even the relatively free upper-classes prefer to spend their time doing the same thing as everyone else, as dictated by the state-enforced love for science, progress, and stability. By contrast, the people of the reservation have not been conditioned by their rulers, and have formed their ideals by themselves based on their interactions with each other and their spirituality. The natives engage often in traditional dance, to pay service to their deities. Though these dances seem similar to the communal activities in London, the reasoning behind them is entirely different: in London, all activities are in the name of mindless entertainment and social coherence, whereas in the reservation, they serve as forms of expression of the self, enacted as part of a group. Take, for example, the pilgrimage to receive one's spirit animal. All the boys travel together to the sacred rock, and through meditation discover their spirit animal: "When the other boys were sent out to spend the night on the mountain – you know, when you have to dream which your sacred animal is" (Huxley 118). The people of the reservation draw a constant parallel to Native American custom, and this includes their respect for tradition. Through this, *Brave New World* paints a picture of a Native American pastoral way of life, stuck in the old ways. Wildlife and nature are treated reverentially, and tools are still made directly from natural resources. The reason the reservation is largely left alone is because the state does not consider it worth the effort to cultivate the land: "a savage reservation is a place which, owing to unfavourable climatic or geological conditions, or poverty of natural resources, has not been worth the expense of civilising" (Huxley 137). This is a marked departure from One State's desire to spread their 'happiness' to as far as other planets. *Brave New World's* policy seems to be that if it would prove difficult to force a landscape to conform to its ideals, it is best left alone, as long as it does not interfere.

Bernard and Lenina, on their visit to the reservation, encounter a young man, John, who serves as a vehicle to counterpoint the state's policies to contemporary values. He is brought to the urban world, and most of the novel's philosophical contemplations are focused through this character's interactions with the scientific world. The aspects of revelation and sacrifice are also found in his character. In attempting to figure out how the world works, John is eventually brought before the Resident World Controller of Western Europe, an intellectual named Mustapha Mond. John educated himself through the collected works of Shakespeare, whose writing is forbidden in future London. To his surprise, Mustapha Mond has read it, among many other forbidden works, including the Bible. Up until this point, John, as well as the upper class citizens of London, had been under the impression that in the brave new world, progress was everything. Mond explains

that the science as enacted by the government did intend progress, but only up to a point. In order to maintain stability the discoveries that science provides must be brought to a halt:

I'm interested in truth, I like science. But truth's a menace, science is a public danger. As dangerous as it's been beneficent. It has given us the stablest equilibrium in history. [...] But we can't allow science to undo its own good work. That's why we so carefully limit the scope of its researches (Huxley 189).

The halting of scientific discovery brought with it the halting of society itself. It is essentially frozen. The only reason society is divided up in its current state is for its own sake: “We could synthesize every morsel of food, if we wanted to. But we don't. We prefer to keep a third of the population on the land. For their own sakes. [...] We don't want to change” (Huxley 186-187). The halting of science is done partly because of the danger that science brings to their stability. They could streamline all their processes and reduce the amount of effort needed to produce food, but they choose not to. It is possible they do so partly because they fear losing all contact with an authentic reality if they remove even the agrarian. Part of *Brave New World's* apocalyptic angle lies in its take on science and progress. One of the aspects of apocalypticism is that of an impending disaster brought about by failing to undertake necessary actions at the appropriate time, and *Brave New World* is apprehensive towards the World State's complete overhaul of birth and nurturing. Thus, the novel indicates that maintaining a link humanity's natural method of development has value in and of itself.

By securing everyone's position in a state-enforced equilibrium, the people have robbed themselves of purpose. The complete lack of purpose and progression of such an advanced world upsets John. The combined disillusionment of this lack of progress and the impossibility of being away from any group activity makes John long back to life in the reservation. Reflecting, he finds that to be unsatisfactory as well, given the fact that he was never included into any group there. As a result, John is a liminal being between urban culture and wild nature, occupying an in-between space: “at Malpais he had suffered because they had shut him out from the communal activities of the pueblo, in civilized London he was suffering because he could never escape from those communal activities, never be quietly alone” (Huxley 195). John thus decides to sacrifice his connection to both ends of the opposition, by moving to the countryside and living on his own, figuratively halfway between the reservation and modern urban London. He can then still live in a comfortable climate, though in his survival employs techniques learned from his days in the reservation. Neither the old nor the modern hold the key to a fulfilling life, *Brave New World* seems to say, and a careful balance might provide a better alternative.

But then where can one go? The government of World Controllers has made clear boundaries as to where it wants its people to move. This is visible in more than one way, the first being the manner in which the reservation is cordoned off by an electric fence: “the fence marched on and on, irresistibly the straight line, the geometrical symbol of triumphant human purpose” (Huxley 92). This fence electrifies anyone and anything it comes in contact with, and the remains of those that touched it still lie next to it. Though the separation of the two civilisations is arguable successful, much wildlife has died as a consequence. There is freedom of movement for the people of urbanised London, at least during their spare time. However, the government prefers for the people to use various forms of transport other than walking, to keep the economy flowing. The government wants its people to approach nature, but also to never reach it: “We condition the masses to hate the country [...] But simultaneously we condition them to love all country sports” (Huxley 31). Through this, the civilised people would never experience any genuine expression of nature's virtues. One of the few exceptions to the London standard of country appreciation is Bernard Marx, who finds a solemn pleasure in the sublime imagery of nature: ““It makes me feel as though...” he hesitated, searching for words with which to express himself, “as though I were more *me*, if you see what I mean. More on my own, not so completely a part of something else”” (Huxley 81). He feels more complete in this state of being overwhelmed by nature's forces. Even though Bernard is different to most other Londoners in this regard, his conditioning takes over when he is finally sentenced to exile in a remote area: “Oh please don't send me to Iceland. I promise I'll do anything I ought to do” (Huxley 188).

It is in the remote areas, not the reservation, that *Brave New World* has an ecocritical grey area. These remote areas come in several forms, one of them being the inhospitable areas freethinkers are sent to by the government. These are the areas such as Iceland, but it is also possible to be sent to Samoa, or the Marquesas. Helmholtz Watson, Bernard's partner in crime, is offered exile to the Falklands, which he accepts graciously. While it would appear that being sent to an unfavourable environment is no joy, it is here that the government does not interfere with the individual. The individuals sentenced to exile are by no means alone either:

He's being sent to an island. That's to say, he's being sent to a place where he'll meet the most interesting set of men and women to be found anywhere in the world. All the people who, for one reason or another, have got too self-consciously individual to into community-life. All the people who aren't satisfied with orthodoxy, who've got independent ideas of their own. Everyone, in a word, who's anyone (Huxley 188).

It appears that the opposition in *Brave New World* between the reservation and the urban

there exists a false dichotomy, as there is a third option in the remote and rural. The people living outside the civilised world or the reservation are free of the government's otherwise large degree of control. The novel does not describe any of these communities, but the few hints the novel provides seem to indicate an appreciation for the sublime aspects of the natural world: Helmholtz chooses a place with catastrophic weather, and Bernard feels in awe at the sight of thunderstorms. In these areas, the World State feels that they could not influence it to a satisfactory degree, and thus decide, for themselves and for their subjects, that it is undesirable, and must be treated with contempt. There is one other space outside both the reservation and the civilised world that *Brave New World* does describe, and that is the place John chooses to exile himself to: an old lighthouse “on the crest of a hill between Puttenham and Elstead” (Huxley 202). Though it is quite close to a nearby village and vitamin factory, nobody ever nears the lighthouse, as their conditioning does not allow them to: “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” (Huxley 31). The people would only pass through it, and never stay to smell the proverbial roses. The rural countryside of England has not stopped existing, however. Though these areas are seemingly discarded, the flora flourishes. Furthermore, as John demonstrates, man can still live here. Through this, *Brave New World* creates a trinity of space between the reservation, which is stuck in the old ways, the futuristic non-freedom of civilised London, and the sometimes inhospitable but nonetheless rural or remote areas where solitude and independence prevail.

The existence of three possible spaces to live in is remarkably different to Zamyatin's *We*, where there was a clear diametric opposition between the One State and the world outside the Green Wall. Huxley's *Brave New World* paints a world where several philosophies coincide with one another. These philosophies live side by side, but with boundaries between them, and moving from one state to another is difficult. The novel essentially examines how the members of each world are happy with their own placement within their own sphere, but also that the inhabitants of either the reservation or London do not find true happiness. Sticking to the traditions of old does not provide a satisfactory life, especially for those such as John that are accepted into the traditions, but neither does a strict scientifically-determined lifestyle. The truth, then, is somewhere in the middle. Not much is heard from the people of these middle states, but the ones of which it is known that they go there (Helmholtz Watson and John), find their situation most agreeable. Arguably, John does not find a comfortable life in rural England, but this can be attributed to the recurring influence of visitors from London and other metropolises that find him. When left alone, both the countryside and John himself may flourish, but the continued hampering of their development by the other states results in John's death. John survives for as long as he does by adapting techniques from both the new and the old, thereby advocating that a middle ground is the way forward, rather than relying on

a radically scientific or radically traditional philosophy to structure a nation's direction.

The sacrifice John makes finds its root in a biblical motif, one that reminds of the motif found in *We*. There, I-330 functioned as a serpent that enticed D-503 to escape his urban prison and enter into the lush world outside the Green Wall. The One State was as the God that sought to prevent its citizens from leaving Paradise, and enter a different world. The roles are not as clearly defined in *Brave New World* as they were in *We*. D-503 was closest to being an Eve-figure, as he was the one tempted by the serpent, and John the savage seems to fulfil a similar role here. John's words upon leaving behind both worlds near the end of the book reflect this Biblical imagery by referencing the effects of eating from the tree of knowledge:

“I say,” Helmholtz exclaimed solicitously, “you *do* look ill, John!”

“Did you eat something that didn't agree with you?” asked Bernard.

The Savage nodded. “I ate civilisation.” (Huxley 200)

This exchange occurs just after the aforementioned conversation with the World Controller, Mustapha Mond, and John is in a state of disillusionment at this time. Though the word 'ate' is in reference to Bernard's question, it also refers to the knowledge obtained from the revelations provided by Mustapha Mond. In this way, he has eaten from the fruit of knowledge. This in turn makes the words of Genesis 3:3 prophetic: “But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die”. With his knowledge and reflections on that knowledge, John does eventually die, by ending his own life. His suicide indicates how the novel values the middle ground between wilderness and the urban, and how different it is from both those two. Only once John lives on his own, in quiet contemplation of his past and present, can he find an agreeable lifestyle. It is the solitude and the independence that the countryside provide that make it an ideal living space.

Bernard, discontented with his place in the world and aiming to get a leg up on his boss, brings John into his world and thereby acts as the serpent urging him to explore another life. Adam and Eve were the first humans, but specifically, Eve was made from Adam, and in *Brave New World*, John was birthed by his mother, Linda. This would not be so exceptional, had Linda not come from a society where children are not born but bred. In this sense, John is the first human to be born with a connection to the utopian world. Another difference to *We* is the degree of choice John has. He is able to carefully weigh the old world against the new world as he is the first man of woman born to set foot in London in centuries, and has the willpower to discard the idyllic security provided in London:

“But I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin.”

“In fact, you're claiming the right to be unhappy. [...] Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the to live in constant apprehension of what may happen to-morrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind.”

There was a long silence.

“I claim them all,” said the Savage at last. (Huxley 198-199)

John believes that it is these flaws that define humans, not just the positive aspects. When one eliminates the bad, the good has less meaning. Paradise is found neither in the brave new world, nor in the harsh unfeeling badlands of Malpais. Thus, John decides to sacrifice his connections to both and move to the countryside, but the serpent's sting of civilisation returns. Even in his newfound solitude, the citizens of the urban world manage to find him. John becomes like an attraction for visiting city folk. Initially, John is only observed, but when journalists engage with John, the metaphor of the serpent is brought back: “Startled as though by the bite of a snake, the Savage sprang to his feet, scattering arrows, feathers, glue-pot and brush in all directions” (Huxley 205-206). And so *Brave New World* continues its theme of the effects of human interaction, either with the environment, or each other. When man encounters a new situation, it is either adapted strongly to conform to the needs and wants of the established order, or ostracised and discarded.

Conclusion and Looking Ahead

We have seen in this thesis how utopian literature engages with the effects of state power on humanity through its relation with nature. Both novels have a strong emphasis on the state's involvement with daily life by rigorously ordering their life, either to further the state's endeavours or to maintain social stability. In both cases, the respective governments of the state have an aversion for freely growing flora in the urban environments. In *We*, almost everything within the city perimeters is made of glass, and the occasional pollen that does find its way into the city is met with disgust. *We*'s protagonist D-503 even comments on how it somewhat “interferes with logical thought” (Zamyatin 5). In *Brave New World* humanity is influenced to be perfectly contented with their current situation, and to not seek out new horizons. The climate in urban London is incredibly mild, and whenever the weather turns even remotely sour, the indoctrinated mind wants to return back to the effortless life of the city. The exceptions to this are the few characters that want to be impressed by the sublime aspects of nature, and they let themselves be overwhelmed by natural forces. These attitudes are toxic to the stability the world states enforce, and so they must be removed. *Brave New World*'s state exiles, *We*'s One State forces its citizens to undergo a lobotomy. The connection to nature that subversive citizens have undermines the totalitarian regimes, as it enables them to fight back against the brutally oppressive system of government both novels have.

When a strong picture as that of a totalitarian regime is presented, it is only natural to counterpoint it by having a completely opposite society or community, and to then lay them side by side. If one has to conjure up a counterpart to a strict urban government, a free rural or wild community would come to mind, as it allows for every aspect of the totalitarian scheme to be compared directly to the alternative. In *We*, this is exactly what occurs, and the dichotomy stands firm, down to almost every aspect of personal growth, room for natural development of the flora, and a balance in ecosystems. The life beyond the Green Wall is described as being strictly better, and the evil One State takes great effort to stamp out any chance for its citizens to flee to that way of life. *Brave New World* takes a markedly different approach to this idea, and instead presents a timeline of sorts. On the one end of the timeline, in the past, there is the traditional, stuck in the old ways and unaccepting of newcomers to their land. On the other end of the spectrum is the radically futuristic, where man has lost all touch with its inherent nature. With few exceptions, people are like puppets, dancing to their masters' tune. The answer the novel presents lies somewhere in the middle, where man can still learn and live off the land, and serenity reigns.

The pastoral ideas that are so prevalent in ecocritical literature are also visible in *We* and *Brave New World*. The pastoral imagery derives its ideals from a connection with the past, or rather,

an idealised image of the past. In a sense, it creates a form of nostalgia that its readers can find an attachment to. This imagery tends to favour a serene environment, where rural communities work and live in harmony with the land they inhabit. As has been mentioned before, the pastoral tradition, too, is a political tool. *We* and *Brave New World* carry within them a strong anti-totalitarian sentiment, and it is therefore no surprise that they employ pastoral imagery to contrast the negative portrayal of the urban states with the positive qualities of countryside living. Both *We* and *Brave New World* combine the images of the pastoral with the biblical narrative of the Fall of Man from Paradise. In *We*, Paradise is situated within the community outside the Green Wall, and in *Brave New World* it seems that the countryside is the most paradisaical, thereby fitting the Paradise-motif within its trinity of the reservation, the rural, and the cities. The ecocritical angle that the pastoral contains, adds to the book's argument that science should be limited, so as not to lose its humanity along the way. *We*, on the other hand, seems to say that while man may attempt to contain the forces of nature, nature will prevail in the end. Through this, *We* seems to be more in line with the notion that nature is an entity in and of itself, whereas *Brave New World* explains its concepts from a strictly human (or androcentric) point of view.

As the two novels are works of dystopian fiction, and dystopian fiction imagines a disturbing future, it is worth applying the ecocritical notion of apocalyptic thematics. Dystopian fiction, like utopian fiction, envisions a technologically advanced future. Where the utopian worlds of H.G. Wells were marked by their positivity, the dystopian alternatives explore the darker implications of a world where almost anything is possible. The ecocritical implications these texts explore have the same origin: a bleak future is examined through its imagery. Apocalyptic writing warns of a catastrophe that will come some time in the future, similar to dystopian fiction. Ecocritical fiction tends to have a cautionary tone, and is marked by its awareness of contemporary issues, with a desire to inspire its readers to take action, or at least be mindful of how they interact with the environment around them.

Ecocriticism as an academic field is fairly recent, and its scope is still limited. It engages primarily with works of non-fiction as its primary sources, and otherwise examines works that have an explicit ecological component. This thesis has taken a markedly different approach, by engaging with its selected novels through close reading, to discover an ecocritical message tucked beneath the surface. It would appear few such readings exist from an ecocritical perspective, though the method of finding specific themes (e.g., masculinity) is by no means an invention of this thesis. It is definitely possible to read texts with an ecocritical mindset, as this thesis has aimed to prove. It allows for the reopening of older debates in light of the new information gained from such an approach. For example, the difference between *We*'s ecological opposition between the One State and the people outside the Green Wall, when compared to *Brave New World*'s trinity of savage,

rural, and urban spaces, makes it apparent that the *Brave New World* is, in this aspect at least, not a rehash of *We*, as George Orwell had claimed (1946). Arguably, this thesis exists as a proof-of-concept for reading canon or established literature from an ecocritical perspective, despite these texts not necessarily being written with an ecological implication in mind.

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