American Nightmare: An Examination of Ideology in Political Dystopia

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Abstract

This article will analyze the evolution of American political ideology through dystopian fiction. The works selected for this article run a wide range of books spanning from *The Iron Heel* by socialist Jack London (1907) to the openly fascist *The Day of the Rope* by Devon Stack (2018). This work will then use a blended approach of historical and political analysis to analyze each work for its overall ideology and how it fits into the larger American historical narrative. This process will look at four parts of each dystopian work: culture, government, sovereignty, and institutions. These attributes will be applied to the dystopian work to assess what the author presents as a danger and assess what alternatives they may present. These analyses will then be viewed considering the broader historical narrative to understand how they reflect American political ideology's overall evolution.

Ultimately, in the examined works, several major patterns arose. First, authoritarianism is a significant feature of dystopian governments but is not exclusively dystopian. A recurring theme amongst fascist and reactionary authors is to present their dystopia as an authoritarian anti-White society while their utopia is a thinly veiled White supremacist state. Liberalism, concurrently, is also not viewed by most authors as a panacea. Left-leaning authors tend to condemn its free-market economic system as an entrance point for oligarchs and corrupt bankers. In contrast, reactionaries and fascists condemn both its social egalitarianism and economic openness as a ploy for cultural genocide. Secondly, despite usually being set in the near future, virtually all the examined dystopias seem to be inspired by the past and how those events connect to the present. As a result, the examined works tend to match up with certain historical reference points that shape their overall narrative. Finally, the overall image of the preferred outcome, or utopia, is more concrete among reactionary and fascist authors than with their more left-wing counterparts. This is likely done in service of their overall goal to provide timely warnings about what they see as rising threats in American society and how they connect to contemporary events.

Keywords: American Politics, Identity, History

1. Introduction

Science fiction, which has long occupied a special place in the American popular culture, is frequently treated as a sort of "minor" creative work. Gaining popularity during the early 1900s, many mainstream authors considered it to be a comparatively unrefined writing area, fit only for pulp novels and niche magazines. However, as discussed by Aaron Santesso in "Fascism and Science Fiction," this understanding of the genre belies its surprisingly complex political messages. The narrative structure of science fiction novels usually features a protagonist either fending off an incoming alien horde or working to wipe out a villainous alien species. This pattern results in what Santesso has suggested is a recurring theme of fascism that cuts against the supposedly socialist tendency of science fiction novels. Dystopian novels, while not as inherently fascist, are similarly open to political messaging. Most dystopian works follow a generic structure of a protagonist living in a state that has seemingly perfected the oppression and punishment of its citizens. This hero, usually in conjunction with other members of a resistance movement or other counter-government force, eventually work to rebel against this system and achieve a new life. Ergo, this opportunity to present
the reader with an image of a correct and incorrect society is often utilized by authors to present a particular political narrative. This work intends to examine these works to track both the evolution of what fears are expressed and how they evolve throughout American history.

2. Methodology and Terminology

To properly examine any work that discusses dystopian and utopian novels, it is crucial to define both terms. As noted by Peter C. Herman in, "More, Huxley, Eggers, and the Utopian/Dystopian Tradition," the very definition of a dystopia is challenging to describe. First, this is because many utopias are seemingly also dystopias. The extreme measures taken to ensure a utopia results in quirks, such as a loss of privacy, that a modern reader would find unacceptable. Secondly, the difference between dystopia and utopia is highly subjective. Galt's Gulch's unrestricted capitalism is presented as utopian in Atlas Shrugged but is virtually identical to the oppressive "Iron Heel" of Jack London's work. Third, if a utopia is considered a perfected society, it could also be argued that most dystopias are essentially utopias.

This study will utilize the examined works' narrative structure to define these terms with this dichotomy in mind. Dystopia, for this study, will be viewed as the society that antagonizes the novel's protagonist. Usually showcased at the beginning of the work, the dystopia is what the protagonist is seeking to flee or overthrow. On the other hand, utopia will reference the alternative society that the protagonist is hoping to achieve. For example, the Republic of Gilead in The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood would be an example of a dystopia. It is hostile toward the protagonist's desires and aims to keep her as a form of slave. On the other hand, the novel's utopia is a composite of her life before the rise of Gilead and the more secular lands outside of Gilead, which she hoped to flee to with her husband and child. While not perfect, the utopia represents the protagonist's ideal world.

To more clearly understand both the author's overall message and political philosophy, each utopia and dystopia will be viewed in terms of four criteria inspired by Douglas A. Van Belle's A Novel Approach to Politics. The first would be culture, which for the purpose of this study will reference the overall political and social culture of a society. This analysis includes looking at what values, signifiers, and attitudes are considered preferable and what ones are considered not. The second examined criteria, government, will consider what form of government the society has and with what general political philosophy it seems to align. The definition for these philosophies will be taken from Political Ideologies and the Democratic Ideal and will include philosophies such as liberalism, socialism, and fascism. The third area of examination will be centered around the sovereignty or control of these societies. This area will consider both the nation's actual political structure and what if any groups are given special privileges in the examined society. Fourth, and finally, the society in question will also be examined for its institutions and structure. For example, the use of religious groups as a dystopian society tool may imply the author has some concern about religion as a constraining force. In contrast, their presence in a utopian society may reflect a belief in its positive benefits. These criteria will then be applied to both the utopian and dystopian societies to assess the author's overall message and political identity. Areas of overlap or conflict will also be noted and further examined.

The examined works were selected based on three primary criteria. First, they must portray a dystopian society in at least some form. Therefore, works like Ernest Callenbach’s Ecotopia were excluded. Secondly, the examined work must also relate to American politics, although this does not necessarily mean that it must be written by an American or even set in America. The Handmaid's Tale, written by the Margaret Atwood, and The Camp of the Saints by Jean Raspail were both written by non-American authors. However, both books were included due to their adoption in the American political sphere. The Handmaid's Tale, which has been adapted into a popular television program, has become a political touchstone in recent years as an example of women rebelling against a patriarchal society. The Camp of the Saints, on the other hand, has become a source of inspiration for American nativists such as Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller. While this American-centric focus does mean that the examined works will likely present only a look into the American political psyche, this limitation was imposed to ensure a manageable body of work and a relation to the researcher's area of political and historical familiarity.

The third and somewhat more subjective criteria for selecting works for this article was that they would need to represent a diverse range of views over a relatively expansive period while also not becoming excessively broad. As such, numerous avenues were explored for sourcing the examined materials. The first, and most obvious route, was by looking to popular culture. Numerous dystopian works, such as The Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood and The Plot Against America by Philip Roth, have experienced popularity in both book and television and thus warrant inclusion. The next avenue of selection was to look at less well-known books that held significant places in American
political thought. For example, *The Turner Diaries* by Andrew Macdonald was a significant source of inspiration for the Oklahoma City Bomber Timothy McVeigh, and along with its spiritual sequel *Hunter* both have had an outsized impact on American White supremacist thought.\(^8\) The third avenue for locating the examined literature can be best described as a sort of "self-guided" hunt where books were located through their connection to better known books or relevant groups. Looking to places like the Southern Poverty Law Center, books such as *Utopia X* by Scott Wilson were often referenced as notorious examples of White supremacist literature.\(^9\) Others, such as *The Day of the Rope* by Devon Stack, were often associated with far-right groups and literature on places like Amazon and Goodreads. Thus, they were included to better round out the examined works.

### 3. Gender

The portrayal of gender in the examined dystopias varies wildly depending on the author's political viewpoint. Liberal and socialist works usually expressed a fear of returning to more antiquated understandings of gender while also advocating for progress in gender equality. One of the best-known examples of this viewpoint is *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. Set in a militant Christian theocracy, the dystopian government uses religion to justify their rule and decision to keep women in a form of slavery to prop up falling birth rates.\(^10\) Other works such as *Underground Airlines* by Ben H. Winters, which imagines a conservative American government still allowing slavery in order to avoid political conflict, was written partly to educate the public on the proliferation of sex trafficking.\(^11\) Written in 1935, *It Can't Happen Here* by Sinclair Lewis, which imagines a fascist takeover of the United States, makes women's forced return to traditional gender roles a crucial part of the fascist movement's program.\(^12\)

However, while it is common for left leaning works to make gender a considerable part of their narrative, some earlier works seemed to take a more muted approach. An explicitly socialist novel, *The Iron Heel* by Jack London, ignores the issue of gender entirely. Although this novel was one of the few examined works with a female protagonist, there is no serious discussion of sexism at any time. This omission is significant because women had not yet even received the right to vote at the time of publication.\(^13\) The protagonist, Avis Everhard, seems to be subservient to male characters such as her husband Ernst, who commands both her and their resistance movement even from prison.\(^14\) While she does become a talented spy, this is Ernest's request.\(^15\) As a result, Avis effectively is a secondary protagonist whose purpose is to aid Ernst and other male characters.

This dissonance between older and newer works is most likely linked to how gender equality has developed over the decades as a facet of social justice. While the injustice of legalized sexism is evident now, it was deeply ingrained in many social justice movements throughout American history. For instance, The World Convention of Abolitionists, one of the premier abolitionist organizations of the time, excluded female members from attending.\(^16\) The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a significant body of the Civil Rights Movement, was known to have a history of institutional sexism.\(^17\) However, as what was considered acceptable evolved, topics such as gender inequality were rapidly considered part of the broader program. Much as how groups such as the Black Panthers shifted in their acceptance of women, many examined works change their perception of what groups are "victims" as the mainstream discourse on social justice came to embrace them.\(^18\) Concurrently, as Soumyanetra Munshi posits in “Partisan Competition and Women’s Suffrage in the United States,” the realization that women represented an untapped pool of voters may have encouraged a political calculus to embrace Suffrage.\(^19\) So, while in 1907 Suffrage may not have been a significant liberal or left-wing cause, it is in later works. As a result, *It Can't Happen Here* by Sinclair Lewis, published in 1935, makes women's oppression a significant part of the fascist "Buzz" Windrip's campaign platform.\(^20\)

Social progress has had the opposite effect on more right-leaning authors. At the turn of the century, female characters were portrayed in a distinctly Victorian way. They were delicate, pure, and destined to be the companion of a man who would care for and provide for them.\(^21\) As a result, a recurring theme in many of the exemplified reactionary and fascist works is dystopian governments allowing violence against women despite supposedly endorsing egalitarianism. There is also an undertone of race in this belief, with the victims usually being White women and the perpetrators being non-White men.\(^22\) *The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* by Thomas Dixon Jr., adapted for D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, embodies this.\(^23\) Set in a dystopian version of the American south, a rabidly anti-White government allows Black Union soldiers to rape White women while constantly accusing White southern men of being backward and intolerant.\(^24\) While later works falter somewhat in how militantly they portray this dynamic, women as helpless victims and non-White men as rapacious brutes can be seen as recently as 2018 with *Day of the Rope* by Devon Stack. Heavily influenced by the Qanon conspiracy theory, Stack's dystopian America is supposedly a form of liberal democracy but is in actuality a crypto-authoritarian state that is secretly controlled by a shadowy cabal of wealthy elites. In turn, these elites routinely traffic and abuse young women for sexual abuse and slaughter while using their influence to enforce a "woke" orthodoxy on the American people.\(^25\) As a
result of this propaganda, one White woman even feels compelled to apologize to her Black rapist for possibly offending him.²⁶

However, much like left-leaning authors, reactionary and fascist feelings about women change over time. This shift was first seen subtly in The Camp of the Saints by Jean Raspail. The anti-White and liberal government is supported by a similarly anti-White and feminist journalist who advocates for the incoming migrant fleet.²⁷ This pattern escalates in more modern works like Hold Back this Day by Ward Kendall and Utopia X by Scott Wilson. Whereas feminism was presented as a mild feature of the dystopian state in Raspail’s novel, Wilson and Kendall feature anti-male feminists as core institutions of their dystopian governments. These works’ governments are difficult to describe but can be best imagined as a National Socialist state that holds traditionally marginalized populations as the master race. Utopia X’s dystopian government is supported by the “World Chapterhouse Movement,” a religious institution that believes men are irrevocably sexist and evil.²⁸ In the workplace, White men are viewed as so untrustworthy and despicable that their non-White female supervisors can harass them with impunity.²⁹ Hold Back This Day by Scott Wilson showcases a bizarre world where women have a seemingly unilateral power to divorce their husbands if they are not satisfied.³⁰ Victoria: A Novel of 4th Generation War by Thomas Hobbes revolves around John Rumford, a former Marine and violent misogynist who strongly any effort to seek gender equality. The dystopian world around him is presented as being riddled with militant feminists, with Southern California being under the control of violent anti-male radicals.³¹ In contrast, Rumford’s resistance movement builds a utopia American successor state in New England, which sponsors a massacre at Dartmouth College due to a resurgence in “cultural Marxism” and gender studies.³²

This shift from paternal protection to violent opposition was unique because it marked an inversion of the liberal and socialist author authors’ evolution. For the liberal and socialist authors, women were ignored until gender equality received broader appeal with the Suffrage movement’s advent as a liberal cause. Reactionaries and fascists, on the other hand, were comfortable with women maintaining a limited role in their world until they began to seriously threaten their worldview with the arrival of second-wave feminism in the late 60s and early 70s. Going further in their pursuit of justice than the first wave, they started pushing against the narrow bandwidth that they had been allowed. This reaction eventually breaks down into one of two views. The first and more moderate approach is a system where women are given a limited opportunity to “transcend” their gender because of their race or religion. This pattern, which matches up with Kathleen M. Blee’s work on women’s role in White supremacist movements, still holds views women in a regressive light but at least allows them some role because of their Whiteness.³³ While White women may still find some credit in these movements due to their race, the increasingly violent and misogynistic nature of many fascist and reactionary works suggests that it may not be long before women are considered wholly incompatible with their belief system. The later and more radical approach is the wholly anti-female philosophy that is now beginning to percolate. As discussed by the Southern Poverty Law Center, this fusion of radical sexism, known as “incel” culture, is rapidly fusing with White supremacist rhetoric.³⁴ Therefore, as reactionary and fascist movements become more and more removed from the time women were viewed in an at least somewhat favorable light, we are more likely to see this later and more extreme view continue to escalate.

4. Religion

To socialist and liberal authors, religion is in part treated as an opiate to encourage the population to accept controls and abuses they otherwise would not. The theocratic Republic of Gilead from The Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood is indicative of this. The Handmaid program is, in effect, a form of chattel slavery that uses Biblical precedent to provide both the program and the nation’s leadership with a sense of legitimacy.³⁵ In the Iron Heel by Jack London, the Catholic Church is a part of the oligarchic “Iron Heel” and is designed to prevent people from questioning their exploitative overlords. This pattern is exemplified in the plight of Bishop Morehouse, a friend of the Everhard family. As punishment for helping the poor, Bishop Morehouse is declared insane and thrown into an asylum for his political insubordination.³⁶ This cynical view of religion also extends to The Parable of the Sower by Octavia Butler, albeit in a unique sense. The protagonist, who is the daughter of a preacher in a decaying Los Angeles suburb, rejects her time’s mainstream Christian faiths, describing her father’s faith and other denominations as being strict and hierarchical.³⁷ However, what makes this work unique is that instead of taking this criticism of religion to inspire a total rejection of it, it instead makes the formation of a new faith a form of salvation for the protagonist and her community.³⁸ In effect, Butler’s novel’s philosophy can be best described as a sort of “anti-religion religion” that preaches a divine entity’s existence but rejects much of the constraints and hierarchy that other faiths feature.³⁹ Concurrently, its condemnation of corrupt capitalism, environmental waste, and discrimination fits squarely within the liberal and socialist worldview.
As a result, while Butler's work has a unique embrace of religion, her faith's overall doctrine is not substantially outside the liberal and socialist political norm.

Many of the fascist authors examined are united in their distaste for Christianity, albeit for different reasons. For some, such as Andrew Macdonald and Devon Stack, the entire Christian faith is a ploy designed to weaken the West. In Hunter, Macdonald suggests that Christianity is a Jewish plot intended to turn the West away from the glories of the Roman Empire and indicates that "Marx's doctrine is as anti-Western as Jesus." He also implies that compromised evangelical ministers support the liberal, anti-White government. The Day of the Rope by Devon Stack also dismisses Christianity as a Jewish front organization. Evangelical ministers are portrayed as pawns of the dystopian government and are usually coded as degenerates and Jewish pawns. Concurrently, it is also implied that Christianity is a form of "slave morality" designed to keep the masses under the control of shadowy elites by encouraging the public to hold blind faith in a "magical Jew."

The other point of view, which is more common in reactionary works, is that most denominations of Christianity have been compromised. Whereas the Catholic and Christian faiths of old were pillars of the West and vigorous in their pursuit of non-Christs, they believe that the modern church has abandoned this in favor of tolerance and multiculturalism. Victoria: A Novel of 4th Generation War by Thomas Hobbes is a prime example of this. The protagonist's revolutionary group, the Christian Marines, explicitly aims to create a "Judeo-Christian" dominion where fundamentalist Christianity reigns and is enforced with violence. This belief in modern Christianity's weakness is also seen in books like Jean Raspail's The Camp of the Saints, which portrays the Catholic Church as a directly complicit in an anti-White campaign to appease their liberal constituents. The Church itself works on behalf of the liberal government to cover up murders to prevent any negative blowback towards the migrant fleet.

In a related sense, it is essential to note that many reactionary and fascist authors are profoundly anti-Semitic, with Hunter and The Turner Diaries by Andrew Macdonald being the most blatant. The former shows the dystopian government as infiltrated at the highest levels of power by a Jewish conspiracy. Meanwhile, The Turner Diaries shows them as cruel puppet masters behind the authoritarian and anti-White dystopian "System" that has directly overtaken the American government. The utopian alternative to this, as presented in both works, involves brutal campaigns of ethnic cleansing. At Hunter's conclusion, the protagonist achieves his dream of forcing a sort of "race war" between the Jewish overlords and their non-White pawns. The Turner Diaries eventually cumulates in the massacre of non-White and Jewish people through "The Day of the Rope," which eventually paves the way for the ideal White ethnostate. The name of this pogrom is used for the similarly anti-Semitic The Day of the Rope by Devon Stack. The novel's dystopian leaders have deep ties to Israel and exploit technology developed in Tel Aviv to keep their secrets. In a seeming nod to blood libel, these secrets include the abuse of abducted children and ritual human sacrifices. The utopian alternative, much like in Macdonald’s work, necessitates a violent uprising against their dystopian Jewish overlords.

Islam is similarly polarizing and can only be understood in the light of 9/11 and the overall reactionary, fascist, and conservative response to it. In the years leading up to the attack, Islam was mostly ignored. There is some oblique criticism of it in The Camp of the Saints, but only in the sense that it was a “foreign” faith on par with Hinduism. Hunter even goes so far as to express some disappointment that the protagonist’s quest for a “pure America” will result in the “poor Arabs” coming into conflict with Jewish agents. However, after 9/11, Islam rapidly transformed to become a uniquely evil and anti-Western faith. In a forward to later editions of The Camp of the Saints, Jean Raspail apologizes for missing the supposedly evil nature of Islam and claims that he should have realized it earlier. Virtually every novel written by a fascist or reactionary author after 9/11 contained some reference to an Islamic takeover supported by a dystopian government. Utopia X implies that virtually all of Europe has been taken over by a Muslim invasion before the novel's events and is the natural conclusion of the multiculturalism that the dystopian government supports. Victoria: A Novel of 4th Generation War spends an entire chapter detailing how the protagonist and his Christian movement valiantly fight against a United Nations-supported invasion of Boston by Islamic militants. In the Year 2050: America's Religious Civil War by Ira Tabakín discusses how not only was former President Barack Obama a secret Muslim, but virtually all American Muslims are active participants in a plot to turn America into an Islamic theocracy.

Socialists and liberals, by comparison, are concerned about this prejudice that is being directed against the Muslim population. The earliest example of this is seen in The Handmaid's Tale, which despite being written in the late 1990s, implies that the theocratic takeover of the United States was justified in part by a false "Muslim terrorist attack" that wiped out the entire of Congress as well as the White House. As the level of Islamophobia began to increase after 9/11, there began an increase in the number of dystopian governments in which Islam is presented as a form of a persecuted group. The Mirage by Matt Ruff imagines a sort of historical switch where America devolves into religious factionalism during the Great Depression while the Middle East is united into a secular and liberal republic.
American radicals conduct a significant terror attack on 11/9, Christians and Americans become rapidly associated with terrorism in what is a clear allegory for Islamophobia in America.63

Concurrently, in response to the frequently rabid anti-Semitism of fascist and reactionary movements, liberal and socialist authors often portray anti-Semitism in their dystopias. It Can't Happen Here by Sinclair Lewis features a dystopian fascist government that threatens Jewish Americans with persecution if they fail to support the regime adequately.64 The Handmaid's Tale implies that while not directly killed, Jews were wholly exiled from the Republic of Gilead since they are considered non-Christian "People of the Book".65 Others, such as The Plot Against America by Philip Roth, both incorporate concerns about anti-Semitism while also making a broader point about the process of whitewashing. Centered in a dystopian version of America, Charles Lindbergh wins the presidency and begins to shift America into a quasi-authoritarian and anti-Semitic state with the help of Rabbi Lionel Bengelsdorf. Serving in both his campaign and his administration, Bengelsdorf severs as a spokesman for Lindbergh to assure non-Jewish voters and moderates that Lindbergh's closeness to the Third Reich is a marriage of political convenience and that his plan to relocate Jewish families is beneficial. As the protagonist's cousin notes, Bengelsdorf's "koshering" of Lindbergh ensures his victory and sets America on the path to authoritarianism.66 Bengelsdorf's unique positioning as a Jewish person who works to erase Jewish culture harkens to what Dan Shiffman refers to in "The Plot Against America".67 This form of limited acceptance is also the same level of tolerance extended to virtually all other groups in numerous far-right novels. The utopian Northern Confederation of Victoria: A Novel of 4th Generation War, for instance, is theoretically nonracist and does not impose any explicit racial constraints upon its citizens. However, the protagonist states how there will no longer be any "shuckin' and jivin'" amongst the Black population, and they will be deported back to Africa if they fail to impress the White population.68 Similarly, the Republic of Gilead uses women as instructors to train Handmaids and market their oppression as a unique brand of feminism.69 As a result, Bengelsdorf serves as a stand-in for this aggressive form of integration that essentially becomes its form of oppression.

5. Race

Much like religion, race also has different effects depending on an author's political leanings. For liberal, socialist, and other left-leaning authors, racism is a long-standing concern. The dystopian government in It Can't Happen Here by Sinclair Lewis is elected on a platform that involves blocking Black Americans from receiving a yearly stipend of $5,000, barring them from voting, and permanently restricting them to manual labor.70 Modern works such as Underground Airlines by Ben H. Winters similarly show how a refusal to confront racism eventually leads to its propagation and de facto acceptance in popular culture.71 In Winter's work, despite the condemnations of many liberals, the conservative United States government and populace allow slavery to continue out of a fear of provoking conflict with the southern states.72 The Mirage by Matt Ruff, in a clear parody of American history, features a supposedly liberal and secular government that begins a hard shift to the right after a Christian terrorist attack. As a result, White people are viewed as backward fundamentalists and violent terrorists, while Middle Eastern people are viewed as reliable and honest citizens.73

Reactionary authors, in comparison, feel the exact opposite way. Ranging from The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan by Thomas Dixon Jr. to The Day of the Rope by Devon Stack, right leaning authors are heavily invested in the belief that the White race and Western civilization are superior. However, while this belief has remained constant over the examined works, its expression method has not. At the turn of the century, reactionary authors would often take an explicitly White supremacist position in their works. Dixon's The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan and The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden both tell of White protagonists seeking to assert the dominance of White civilization over what they view as the inferior "lesser races," which were mostly Black.74 The former novel explicitly aims to redeem the Ku Klux Klan while advocating for White supremacy. The latter work, which Dixon intended to serve as a response to Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe, portrays former slaves as either violent savages who murder children or lazy drunks.75 Furthermore, while some people opposed this, this view was reasonably representative of American popular opinion during the early 20th century. America considered itself to be a "White nation" and frequently worked to undermine any attempts at equality between Whites and non-Whites through policies such as segregation and eugenics.76

However, the public acceptability of this belief was massively strained by America's entry into World War II. Needing to define itself in opposition to the genocidal Third Reich, American propaganda underwent a significant turn and suddenly began to present America as an egalitarian nation.77 Similarly, the revelation of the Holocaust also tainted the popularity of policies like eugenics. Whereas previously it had been the science of the future, it was now
forever associated with genocide and militant racism. American reactionaries and fascists at the time thus found they had to pretend at least to be egalitarian in order to be still tolerated.

This shift resulted in many White supremacist authors adopting the position that the White race was now under attack and on the verge of being wiped out. Dystopian governments were virtually identical to Nazi Germany but with minorities, women, and the LGBTQ+ community as the master race and White men as a marginalized group. The utopia represented by the protagonist’s resistance movements was now also focused on creating a place where they could be free from persecution. The dystopias of Utopia X by Scott Wilson, Hold Back This Day by Ward Kendall, and Victoria: A Novel of 4th Generation War by Thomas Hobbes all feature non-White rulers working to oppress the White race through propaganda, subtle manipulation, and even literal eugenics in the case of Utopia X. Similarly, while Dixon’s works portrayed White protagonists as victorious crusaders against inferior non-White antagonists, these later authors do the opposite and portray Whites as the minority. Like Utopia X, some draw parallels between the supposed decline of the White race and Native American tribes’ extinction. Others suggest that racial purity is needed to protect all races, not just the White race. In Hold Back this Day, a sympathetic Japanese doctor, who is also the last of his kind, helps the White protagonist escape the dystopian government’s security forces out of a sense of racial solidarity.

However, this supposed egalitarianism is exposed as a fig leaf by the rest of the novel’s narrative. The sovereign of Utopia X’s dystopian state, who also serves as a sort of composite character for the entire society, is a caricature of a Black man who is motivated solely out of a desire to punish White people and pursue White women. Hold Back This Day, which also imagines White people as being on the verge of extinction, suggests that the dystopian state’s sustained campaign of race-mixing has permanently lowered the global I.Q. and cost the government their ability to engage in space travel. Victoria: A Novel of 4th Generation War is riddled with numerous racial stereotypes, including referring to a Black veteran as a rare exception to all Black men being absentee fathers. In effect, even when claiming that they only care about fairness, reactionary and fascist authors still are incapable of not expressing their staunch belief in White superiority. Moreover, in doing so, they show a steady connection to the White supremacist authors of old while just changing their language slightly.

6. The LGBTQ+ Community

The LGBTQ+ community only recently has become an area for authors to consider. Reactionary and fascist authors began to incorporate them as a facet of their dystopian states early compared to liberal and socialist authors. While a comparatively minor first appearance in The Camp of the Saints, it is implied that LGBTQ+ advocacy groups are affiliated with France’s anti-White government. However, as the visibility of the LGBTQ+ community increased, they rapidly became more substantial institutions of the dystopian governments. Hunter suggests that they are secret pawns in the Jewish controlled government and frequently engage in violent demonstrations designed to spread AIDS. Other works, such as Victoria: A Novel of 4th Generation War and “Letter from 2012 in Obama’s America” by Focus on the Family, suggest that the LGBTQ+ movements are fronts for pedophiles and aligned with either anti-Christian or anti-American movements. In the former work, this is stated to be the motivation behind a Maine law mandating that all schools hire a gay guidance counselor who is then given unsupervised access to children. In the latter work, a quasi-socialist dystopian government lead by Barack Obama stacks the Supreme Court with radical liberals who mandate the Boy Scouts accept LGBTQ+ counselors. In turn, this results in the Boy Scouts claiming that they can no longer guarantee their member’s safety and thus close down. Hold Back this Day takes this to a more extreme end, with the dystopian government endorsing pedophilia as a valid sexuality and accusing any people who object of homophobic.

Liberal authors, on the other hand, seemingly took much longer to come around to the idea of LGBTQ+ equality. The first example of a positive LGBTQ+ character in a liberal work was not seen until almost thirty years after the first appearance of one in The Camp of the Saints. This positive character, Moria, from The Handmaid’s Tale by Margaret Atwood, was a morally exemplary character but was somewhat complicated by the way that she fulfilled numerous late 1990s stereotypes regarding lesbians. She is shown to be a radical lesbian who lived on a feminist commune before her imprisonment by the government’s security forces. While she does escape for a period, the novel’s protagonist references never seeing her again after a chance encounter at a brothel where Moria is enslaved. As a result, her death seems to play into harmful trope of killing off LGBTQ+ characters. Concurrently, her presence also represents a rather severe dearth of LGBTQ+ characters in non-reactionary or fascist works, which also tracks with the overall historical pattern. As discussed by Simon Hall in his history of the gay rights movement, LGBTQ+ equality movements arose only during the early 1950s, and even then were heavily marginalized. Gay individuals
were often viewed as blackmailed toadies of Communist Russia and were treated as security threats. The Stonewall Riots, which occurred in 1969, was when the movement first gained any mainstream purchase. Even then, it was still not until recently that they were able to gain popular support. Therefore, it is not surprising to see their comparative absence in the examined works.

7. Economics

One surprising area of overlap amongst the examined political groups was regarding economics. Namely, regardless of the examined ideology, many of the dystopian works examined were quite critical of capitalism. For socialist and many liberal authors, this was not unexpected. The Iron Heel by Jack London, an avowed socialist, explicitly discusses how a capitalist conspiracy is planning to overtake the government and remove all democracy. Concurrently, in It Can't Happen Here, the fascist dystopian government is supported by wealthy bankers despite its supposedly populist bent. The Hunger Games, by Suzanne Collins, famously includes an oligarchic dystopia where the elites use blood sports fought by children as a means of both terrorizing the populace and providing a sort of entertainment for their wealthy leaders. As a political movement based on community involvement and social equality, it is not surprising that most liberal and socialist authors are critical of capitalism. However, what was surprising was how many on the reactionary and fascist side of the political spectrum echoed these criticisms. True, there is a specific strain of anti-Communism in many examined works. Victoria: A Novel of 4th Generation War makes a crusade against "cultural Marxism," a significant part of the overall narrative. The Day of the Rope by Devon Stack also derides tech executives as Communists.

Nevertheless, while they may decry Communism, many of these authors, both past and present, seemingly feel that capitalism is a force for their destruction. This view of capitalism as a form of exploitative doctrine goes as far back as The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan by Thomas Dixon Jr., where the narrator implies the dystopian corruption and anti-White sentiment is the doing of "Northern Capitalists." Stack similarly implies that the supposedly Communists tech executives are also covert globalist oligarchs.

For reactionary and fascist authors, critique of capitalism often contains anti-Semitic undertones, with White supremacists such as David Lane connecting supposed control of the economy with a Jewish plot for White genocide. Expanding past the usual canard of them as greedy, they also believe that the supposed Jewish domination of the banking and entertainment industries is proof of their genocidal plot. For instance, Hunter by Andrew Macdonald shows the Jewish and anti-White dystopia as having infiltrated the American entertainment industry. They then use this influence to propagate their anti-White message and censor any criticism of themselves. Towards the end of The Turner Diaries, also by Macdonald, the protagonist's utopian White ethnostate prosecutes capitalists and libertarians since they effectively allowed the Jews to take control of the government through their obtuse dedication to the free market and democracy. The Day of the Rope also implies that major tech companies are the pawns of the liberal dystopian overlords, who also have deep connections to Israel.

Similarly, many reactionary works suggest capitalism is a device for the elimination of their preferred cultural values. Victoria: A Novel of 4th Generation War, while less anti-Semitic than other comparable works, seems to treat virtually all forms of advanced technology or industry with contempt. After the United States' collapse, the newly formed utopian Northern Confederation's economy is reduced to low-level manufacturing and mass deindustrialization, which the protagonist believes is the ideal. As he proudly declares, the Northern Confederation's new economic model marked "the end of rampant consumerism" that brought about the end of the previously decadent and dystopian America. The Northern Confederation even uses religion to enforce this anti-technology doctrine, with Catholic priests refusing to give Communion to families who own televisions. Other works, such as "A Letter from 2012 in Obama's America," show that a dedication to consumerism results in profit-hungry companies effectively marketing pornography to children, with the Supreme Court removing any attempt at legal recourse.

8. Conclusions

Ultimately, several major patterns emerged regarding both the overall evolution and composition of the examined works. First, while there are significant gaps regarding ideology, there is a particular reaction against liberalism and authoritarianism amongst all the examined authors, although to different degrees and for different reasons. For left-leaning authors, the reaction against authoritarianism is unsurprising. Whether it be socialism or liberalism, there is an obvious reaction against the concept of a single person or a small group of individuals holding intense control over a society. The fascist government of It Can't Happen Here, the theocratic Republic of Gilead in The Handmaid's Tale,
or the crypto-fascist government of *The Plot Against America* all showcase this fear. However, there is also a certain degree of rebellion against some of the ideals of liberalism. While not completely rejecting it, there is also a frequent criticism of free-market economics that permeates many of the examined works. *The Parable of the Sower*, for instance, directly connects exploitative corporations and their political pawns to the coming ecological collapse. The *Iron Heel* suggests that an obtuse dedication to the free market is what allowed the corrupt oligarchs to lay the groundwork for the supranational “Iron Heel” that eventually consumes America. While not explicitly dedicated to this criticism of economics, other works similarly feature characteristics of malignant wealth in the dystopian society.

A major backer of the fascist government in *It Can’t Happen Here* is presented as a cabal of bankers who believe that the authoritarian government will provide them with increased business opportunities.

Reactionary and fascist authors, in comparison, focus most of their ire on the topic of liberalism. True, there is a somewhat recurring theme of “bad” authoritarian governments throughout their works. Macdonald, Wilson, Hobbes, and Stack all include either directly or covertly authoritarian governments as part of their anti-White or anti-Western dystopias. However, as the various works reveal, reactionary and fascist authors’ solution is to implement a different, albeit more White-friendly authoritarian government. For example, in *The Turner Diaries* by Andrew Macdonald, this includes creating an American successor state that eventually ensures the destruction of all non-White races and “race traitors”. Therefore, even in works claiming to rebel against modern social justice movements’ supposed tyranny, the goal is simply a form of dictatorship.

Liberalism, as one may suspect, is derided by reactionary and fascist authors. Much like the left leaning authors, these authors believe that free-market capitalism represents a significant threat to society. However, whereas left-wing authors believe this is because it allows unchecked income disparities and opportunities for corruption, fascist and reactionary authors detest it for how it may place the White race at the mercy of non-Whites. Whether it be in *The Clansman*’s derision of Northern industrialists or *The Day of the Rope*’s screed against globalists, almost all reactionary authors contain some undertones of anti-economic liberalism. The socially egalitarian nature of liberalism is also similarly viewed as a significant threat to reactionary and fascist authors. The concept that all people are equal or possess some form of innate rights cuts against their ultranationalist, White supremacist, or otherwise bigoted views and as such is antithetical.

Secondly, it was also noted that almost all the examined authors conceptualize either their fears or hopes for the future in light of the past. For right-leaning authors, this dynamic can be best described as a sort of connection to ancient Rome. By and large, their dystopias contain thematic elements of living in a fallen civilization that foreign hordes have overrun. For *The Clansman*, the metaphorical “Rome” is the American south, a place of former grandeur and tranquility. Reconstruction, which serves as the novel’s dystopia, is the metaphorical fall, which allowed hordes of freed slaves to rape the once proud land. *The Camp of the Saints* similarly invokes a connection to a distant French past of grandeur and power, only for it to be sacked by the migrant fleet. *Hunter, The Turner Diaries, Hold Back This Day*, and *Utopia X* all similarly imagine a world where America has either been compromised by a secretive cabal, split into an anti-American successor state, or subsumed into a massive world state. Each case ultimately furthers this dynamic of there being an ideal and ancient America that existed before the culturally degraded dystopia.

Liberal, socialist, and other left-leaning authors tend imagine the world in a historical dynamic that relates to World War II. For these authors, their narrative usually centers around the protagonist living in a society that either has recently become or is in the process of becoming an authoritarian society. Whether it be the rise of Lindbergh in *The Plot Against America*, the fascist leadership of “Buzz” Windrip in *It Can’t Happen Here*, or the rapid ascension of the Republic of Gilead in *The Handmaid’s Tale*, these authors often both seek a return to normalcy while also providing a commentary on the forces that lead to the rise of the authoritarian system in the first place.

The third point, which is also related to the previous one about historical imagination, is how authors often diverge in what they present as an alternative to the dystopia in their novels. While this is, to an extent, an undertone of all the novels, reactionary and fascist authors tend to be the most vocal about what it is they believe should replace the dystopia. Although some show up earlier than others in their respective works, reactionary authors will almost always present a concrete example of their ideal. Like the Northern Confederation in *Victoria: A Novel of 4th Generation War*, some are formed early on and are essentially functioning states where the author showcases the application of their views. Others, such as a racially homogenous settlement of Native Americans that take pity on the White protagonists of *Utopia X*, are less well defined but showcase the authors belief in the importance of racial homogeneity.

Liberal and socialist authors, on the other hand, are much more less defined. Their protagonists often seem to be directly reacting against the dystopian government's general nature, which is usually a blatantly right-wing authoritarian state. However, there is peculiarly little if any definition provided as to what the opposite should be. *The Hunger Games* concludes with the protagonist successfully manipulating the dystopian government into sparing her and her friend's lives, only for her to realize that doing so has likely increased her chances of being killed. *It Can’t Happen Here*, which was written before World War II, ends with America being trapped in a quasi-civil war after the.
fascist dictator abdicates his office to flee to France.\textsuperscript{114} The Plot Against America, in perhaps the most obvious example of this, ends with Lindbergh disappearing and Roosevelt winning the presidency, resulting in America’s entry into World War II and a return to history as we know it.\textsuperscript{115} As a result, while it could be read as a sort of refusal to look at the underlying causes of problems in society, it could also be a way of connecting these narratives to the present day. By directly showing the passage from a seemingly ordinary time to the dystopia, these authors make a direct connection to a time period. While this context may vary depending on the era, by directly showing a “before” the dystopia, these works better connect themselves to the moment in which they were written.

9. Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Professor Robert Darst of the University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth Honors Program, who was instrumental in the formulation of this article and in getting it to this stage. The author would also like to thank Professor Catherine Gardner and the University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth Honors Program, who provided funding for this project as well as critical guidance.

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